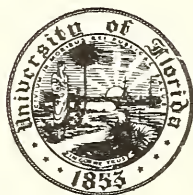



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THE ROAD FROM SHARPEVILLE

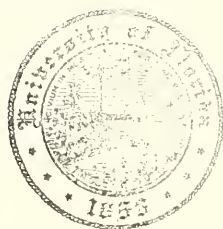
THE ROAD FROM SHARPEVILLE

By

BERNARD SACHS

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To
ALF ARONSTAM
AND
SOLLY JACOBSON

110-111

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The Road to Sharpeville

Quest for Canaan

THE SOUTH AFRICAN scene, with its multiplicity of problems, is so heavily charged with emotion that it is not easy to bring to it that analytical calm which alone can help us emerge from the jungle of controversy, hate and fear. I am entirely opposed to the doctrine of extreme Afrikanerdom, of which Dr Verwoerd is the outstanding exponent; and I believe that, if unchecked, this doctrine will bring ruin to South Africa. Yet I am not prepared to concede that South Africa is a land where nature has deposited evil the way it has lodged the gold ore here. Though our situation is tragic, though evil stalks our land, it is still necessary to try to estimate those forces, historical, social and economic, which have brought about this state of affairs. To modify Burke's famous adage, a whole nation cannot lightly be indicted. And I shall adduce all the extenuating evidence, in an effort to draw a picture that is whole and rounded.

Three salient forces from their past have shaped the character of the Afrikaner people: nomadism; economic disintegration through 'poor whiteism'; and defeat in war. As a result of the nomadic trait, deeply ingrained in the Afrikaners, the cultural and spiritual values we generally associate with western civilization had only a tenuous hold on those regions under their dominion during the last century. Defeat in war and economic disintegration gave the Afrikaner an inferiority complex, which under certain circumstances can become aggressive and even unbridled.

During the Napoleonic wars the British, fearing that France would act first, occupied the Cape without taking the susceptibilities of the Afrikaner into account. The Afrikaners could not endure the conqueror and his ways. The emancipation of the slaves interfered with their rural economy, and, in a way, paralleled the political struggles of the present day. Even before the arrival of the English, the Dutch governors had found great difficulty in impressing the prestige of their person and the authority of their government upon these Boers who valued the freedom of the vast open spaces above all else.

So, with their ox-wagons, they moved away, through the ravines and precipices of the Hex River Mountains—which even modern transport finds difficult to negotiate—in an exodus that has come to be known as the Great Trek. And when these hazards were overcome, they found themselves in the semi-desert karroo which forms a large portion of the interior of South Africa.* Beyond the karroo lay fertile land, for the control of which they would have to fight primitive African tribes that were as reluctant as they themselves were to play the role of a conquered race. But no perils would delay their flight from the Land of Egypt. With the Bible and their rifles they set out for Canaan. Where their wagons came to rest, and were arranged in the form of an oblong that served as a protection against the roving black tribes, they founded a village. Their journey through the desert, which lasted longer than the Biblical forty years, is marked by places such as Elim, Hebron, Bethlehem, establishing strong emotional ties with the Old Testament. They endured their disasters and proved their heroism by the heavy trail of sacrifices they left behind as they moved steadily northward over the months and years.

One wonders why it was that with a whole virgin subcontinent at their disposal, black and white should have grappled in such fierce contest for mastery. They viewed each other instinctively

* The karroo is a high plateau of clayey soil, waterless in the dry season.

with suspicion and fear; each believed his own survival could be ensured only by the other's annihilation. Here, on the austere plains of southern Africa, the philosophy of Schopenhauer was emphatically affirmed that the Will—the will to survive—is the irreducible, primeval principle of being; that it is born of greed and compulsion, and is truly a thing to shudder at.

The Afrikaners fought a difficult battle for survival in regions far removed from the centre of civilization. The civilization they themselves proceeded to build was not a natural extension from its base in the Cape, where it had comparative breadth and depth, but an unnatural tear-away in the form of the Great Trek. They were not very skilled in husbanding their farms, for this appeared unnecessary to them when an apparently endless country stretched just ahead. If all sustenance was drained from the soil, they could move on to new pastures. It was this initial wastefulness to which a great deal of latter-day poverty and 'poor whiteism' is to be traced. As civilization encroached upon them they moved onward, abandoning their farms and moving away with their wives and children and remnants of stock. The life was free and, with the abundant game of the country, food was not difficult to come by.

There were in fact many minor treks before the Great Trek. Long before the concerted inland movements of the Boers, the country had been combed by isolated hunters and traders, whose tales attracted the settler farmer as well as the roving herder. The conquest of nature was wide and thin. The chief features of this society were primitive social forms, economic backwardness and a low level of culture. Burghers, craftsmen and merchants, who were an important feature in Europe's evolution, played no part. These were frontiersmen and pioneers, isolated from their base not only by distance but also by their rebelliousness of temper.

'Poor whiteism' can be correlated with the nomadism of the Afrikaner, for the poor whites were, in the main, nomads drifting

across the face of the country, drawn hither and thither by continual economic stress and strain.

Under Roman-Dutch law the paternal farm was divided in equal shares among all the children; alternatively, the sons alone got the land and had to compensate the sisters in money. Often, however, a stipulation was made in the will restraining the heirs from selling their land to strangers. Some of the farmers tried to assure the land for their descendants and restrained their sons from disposing of the inheritance, the rights being vested alone in the second generation or even the third. But even wise codicils could not improve matters. No matter how small the farms already were, they were sectioned still further on the death of the father. It soon became impossible for the sons to drag a living from the soil. Many sold out to their brothers, took the money and drifted away; others clung desperately to their pitiful inheritances, married and begot children, who in turn would succeed to ever-decreasing portions of land. Agricultural division went hand in hand with biological multiplication. Those who sold out to family and friends found themselves without the means or the ability to fit into another type of life; those who remained found themselves in possession of an inheritance which, no matter how energetically and carefully they farmed, could not furnish a living. Tradition rather than wisdom dictated the laws of acquisition and disposal of land, and the farming population was very slow in adjusting itself to the altered conditions. In the Transvaal, more notably, this splitting up of farms had disastrous results. Here approximately one thousand farms were under five morgen in extent, a size which, no matter how scrupulously tended and worked, will not admit of profitable exploitation.*

The psychological effects of 'poor whiteism' soon showed themselves. In the isolation of those early days a certain lack of ambition was bred in the second generations. A sense of passivity

* A morgen is equal to about two acres.

and fatalism ate into their vitals. The farmer farmed his land in a spoliatory way, without considering that the land would not for ever yield crops without fertilization and attention. Then there were the further uncertainties of erratic rainfall and animal diseases, so spiritually debilitating. The manner of life of these farmers was not conducive to industry. With Native labour so easily obtainable, the farmer had a rooted prejudice against 'kaffir work'. He became the supervisor, not the worker. His children, when they later drifted into the towns, often carried this prejudice with them.

The isolation from community living had the further effect of making the farmer a bad business man. Lack of insight and experience of ordinary business principles and methods was notorious. The farmer bought his requirements on the credit system, trusting that at harvest or shearing time he would gain enough to meet his debts. This credit buying led to extravagance, and all too often the farmer was legally dispossessed of his land by the foreign storekeeper whose bills he was unable to meet.

Education, or rather the lack of it, has played no small part in retarding the development of the poor white. In the early days of the rural population, there was a dearth of teachers; education was in the main confined to preparation for Church membership, and it was not uncommon towards the beginning of this century to find among the rural community grown men and women who could neither write nor read. What education the children acquired was intended for practical purposes rather than the development of mentality; the laziness engendered by the ease with which one could escape hard physical labour was carried into the region of mental labour. Until 1843, when certain State grants were made to rural schools, each family managed as well as it might in the matter of formal education for its children.

The Dutch Reformed Church must be given full credit for the vigour with which it applied itself to redeeming these lost legions from total disintegration. Without them, larger

numbers would have sunk to the 'Tobacco Road' level. As it is, under the burning South African sun, many of the Afrikaners succumbed to a barren apathy and sank to the level of poor whites. All that was left to them was their white skin which gave them a superior status over the black man, and with it a hatred for the latter, rooted in the fear that any improvement in the African's social position would leave them, as poor whites, bereft of racial pride as well as property. Vigorous political action on the part of Afrikanerdom could alone prevent a sizable part of the nation from being doomed. It explains their relentlessness today.

This brings us to the Boer War, one of the climacterics in South African history, which shaped the politics of the country to this day.

For many years the British were little concerned with the Afrikaners who had moved away into the interior on the Great Trek. The Cape was of importance only as a strategic point on the route to India. The discovery of gold and diamonds transformed the scene completely. England coveted Naboth's gold-mines, and there followed the dramatic struggle for possession between Rhodes and Kruger. The Afrikaners had obtained sanction for the subjection of the African tribes by referring to the lot of Ham, son of Noah; the British statesman Lord Milner sought sanction for the conquest of the Boers with the declaration that 'a medieval race oligarchy could no longer have the fate of a great modern industry in its hands'. Three years of hard fighting in the Boer War wrested this great modern industry from the medieval race oligarchy. There was much sympathy for the Boers in their heroic struggle with a mighty imperial nation; but it cannot be denied that, from the purely economic aspect, Lord Milner was right. And this is of significance today as the contours of South Africa's economy are being shaped. This cannot be said openly in a country where two-thirds of the

white population are Afrikaners; Lord Milner said it in the buccaneering days of Joseph Chamberlain.

The Boers fought a heroic struggle. But it was in vain, and they went down to defeat. It is not possible to read the story of the Boer War without a pang at what the Afrikaner people suffered and endured in their effort to hold on to their freedom. The war left behind a bitterness that has projected itself into the events of today. A case can be made out against the Afrikaners on moral grounds. After all, they left the Cape because the British administration would not permit them to go on enslaving the indigenous tribes. But there is more to it than that. The Cape was taken from them arbitrarily, and the conquerors looked down on them as inferior beings—the way the Afrikaner looks down on the African today, ironically enough. Their drawing away from such civilization as existed in the Cape may have been ill-conceived, paralleling in a way the hard-headedness of the Jews who defied the Roman Empire and went into endless exile; but the thrust against an awful destiny is nevertheless impressive and deeply moving. Incidentally, the Old Testament was the lodestar for both these peoples. It hardened the Afrikaner, but it did not ennoble him.

The rise of General Smuts

Round about 1905, when time was beginning to wash away the hatred engendered by the Boer War, the British Premier Campbell-Bannerman decided that Lord Milner's policy of 'the need for breaking the neck of Afrikanerdom' was not likely to make possession of South Africa peaceful. Campbell-Bannerman's was the modern approach to politics. He acted on the principle that if you spear an opponent he can become as furious as a whale and overturn the boat, but if you tickle him he falls gently into your hands like a trout. The period of appeasement of the Boers saw the rise of General Smuts.

General Smuts was the only South African figure of world stature. His life reveals much that is salient in South Africa itself, as well as in the links that bind it to the world. The Cape, where he was born, was too placid for this youth who as a student at Stellenbosch had been carried away by Cecil Rhodes's dream of a greater South Africa. The feverish tempo of the Transvaal towards the end of the century, where a climax was approaching in the struggle for hegemony between Boer and Englishman, drew Smuts in 1896. He threw himself into the conflict, with all his intellect and passion, and in a book he wrote just before the outbreak of the Boer War he gave expression to sentiments that for their intensity recall the heroic stand of Holland against Spain, and the dramas of Schiller. Here is a passage that conveys the bitterness the Boers felt towards Britain, a bitterness which continued long after the Boer War had ended:

Up to the present our people have remained silent; we have been spat upon by the enemy, slandered, harried and treated with every possible mark of disdain and contempt. But our people, with a dignity which reminds the world of a greater and more painful example of suffering, have borne in silence the taunts and derision of their opponents. . . . As the wounded antelope awaits the coming of the lion, the jackal and the vulture, so do our poor people all over South Africa contemplate the approach of the foe.*

Smuts was not only a scholar but a man of action. In the Boer War, at the head of a commando, he overcame every difficulty he encountered—the English soldiery continually in pursuit, the mountain passes, flooded rivers—with the ease that he moved through the intricacies of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, which he carried in his saddle-bag right through the war.

Defeat in the Boer War found Smuts in the abyss of despair. In a letter to Emily Hobhouse, an English nurse who had tended the sick Boer women in Kitchener's concentration camps, Smuts conveys to us in sombre cadences the bleakness of his mood as his country lay under the foot of the conqueror. He wrote:

* [J. C. Smuts] *A Century of Wrong* (London, 1900), pp. 89–90, 95.

You twit me with watering my orange trees when I ought to be up and doing. What is there for me to do? I and mine belong to the vanquished, and over our country is now being written—with ink which no time will ever fade—the brutal *vae victis* policy of the conqueror. To scream, to make a noise, even resolutely to agitate, is not my line. South Africa is on the downgrade. . . . One's only consolation in such a scene is to watch the trees grow, to see how nature teems with ever new and fresh life and absorbs the evil and dreary waste of yesterday into the beauty of tomorrow. . . . Sometimes when I think over the past, I wonder whether after all it would not be best for the Afrikaner people to quit the tests, resign to their British opponents, and in peacefulness find that consolation to which they are now justly entitled after a century of fruitless strife. . . . One becomes sick and tired of life's toil and endless endeavour, and begins to long for rest. Place me in old age among the hills and koppies where as a little child I looked after the sheep and cattle, and let me lie where I was raised from Mother Nature.

But Smuts was not the man to retire to the gentle folds of nature. As a realist, he accepted the facts of the situation and steered his course accordingly. What were the factors that reconciled him to Britain? There was the Campbell-Bannerman liberal policy which made a reconciliation possible. But this alone does not explain why a section of the Afrikaners remained intractable, while Smuts orientated himself afresh in a manner that is one of the miracles of the modern political age.

Smuts was born in the civilized sedateness of the Cape, and he acquired his education at the University of Cambridge, where he had a most distinguished scholastic career and developed a European outlook. During his years as a student he wrote a book on Walt Whitman, waxing rhapsodical about the spirit of democracy which the American poet celebrates, and which to the Smuts of later years was realized in the British Commonwealth. He, in fact, believed that the Kingdom of God on Earth would be established in the model of the British Empire. With all its virtues, Paul Kruger's Transvaal was backward and agrarian; its isolation had left it encased in the crust of medievalism. It was good enough for the farmer General de Wet, and for the Calvinist Dr Malan. But Smuts was more of a botanist than a farmer; more

of a pantheist than a theologian. For the average Boer farmer a blade of grass is just fodder for cattle, but for Smuts it was also an *étude* in the metamorphosis of species which so fascinated Goethe.

Another characteristic trait of Smuts was his emphasis on order, whose spirit the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century immortalized with their stately interiors, and which emerges from the prose of Spinoza and Grotius. Here is the solidity of a symmetrical stone edifice, for it embodies the hopes and aspirations of the rising middle classes about to place their stamp on civilization moving into the Age of Reason. Smuts made it his life's mission to impose order on South Africa, a raw, young country. And he borrowed much from the Roman Empire and Mussolini's fascist Italy. But it did not prove simple. There were the clashes with the workers on the Rand. On top of this, the majority of the Afrikaners were intensely anti-imperialist. Clausewitz had it that war was politics conducted by other means; the Afrikaners reversed the dictum, regarding politics as a continuation of war by other means—their strategy after 1902 was to wipe out their defeat in the Boer War by political processes, with what successes we shall see later.

In embracing British ideals, Smuts displayed the excessive zeal of the convert; and this, allied to a dictatorial temper, tended all too often to aggravate animosities—more particularly in the early part of his career. From the despondency that overcame him after the defeat of the Boer War, when he thought of retiring to the mountains, he had moved back into society with a rebound that made him the terror of South Africa. The solemnity of the symphony's second movement was followed by a furious third.

Smuts's policy, especially from 1910 onward, was to build a South African nation harmoniously compounded of the English and Afrikaner sections—to make of it, as it were, a melting-pot along the lines of America, where German, Jew, Greek, Italian

were to be all merged indistinguishably in the American people. He believed it would be for the best if the tough seed of Afrikanerdom were to die and be reborn again in the South African nation—an essay in Holism. In time, with accelerated immigration, he hoped to tame the turbulent rebelliousness of the hard-core Afrikaners, who were scheming to regain the hegemony over their country they had lost in the Boer War. It so happened that he also had to use quite a few bullets.

Let us now return to the poor whites, who were destined to play an important part in the shaping of South Africa's future with the discovery of gold and diamonds and the growth of the cities which this promoted.

Up to 1870, the white inhabitants of South Africa were predominantly rural. But with the discovery of gold and diamonds round about 1880, a new order came into being. The Industrial Revolution, in South Africa as elsewhere, led to a continuous drift to the towns, particularly as rural conditions were so difficult. The towns and industries both offered, or appeared to offer, more chances of employment for the white unskilled labourers than these could obtain on the land. They migrated in search of new opportunities, and the migration increased as their opportunities on the land diminished. In some cases the migrants from rural areas did obtain good employment, but many others were bitterly disappointed since their lack of any special training, knowledge or experience handicapped them from the outset.

Most important of all, the poor white drifting to the towns found himself competing with the blacks for unskilled jobs, and at a serious disadvantage. The African was physically better fitted for the type of work, and his standard of living was lower. There was also a prejudice among the poor whites against what is termed 'kaffir work'. The mines offered opportunities for quite a number, for little skill was required to direct black miners to drill their jackhammers into the gold ore. The rural South

African is slow-thinking and settled in his ways; he does not take easily to innovations.

There was no gradual transitional period of development in the country's economic structure, and this gave a certain hectic character to the towns which began to spring up. Not only was capital coming in by the millions from abroad, but Cornish miners were arriving from the tin mines of Cornwall to help the gigantic gold-mining industry to get started. They brought with them from Britain a militant trade union tradition. General Smuts, who had set himself the task of imposing order on the South African scene, treated these refractory workers with disdain, as if they were a kaffir tribe that would not submit to authority. Where the Africans were dubbed savages, a classification which placed them outside the pale, Smuts called the militant workers by the sinister name of syndicalists—against whom the State was entitled to use every Draconian measure. This was the least worthy phase of his whole political career. The mob fought back, as only a Johannesburg mob can, and soon Smuts gathered about his name more hatred than any person in the history of South Africa. And then there was the feverish flow of fortune-seekers who were ready to leave the crowded cities of Europe for what distant Africa could offer. They were much more skilful than the rural poor in grabbing the golden manna flowing from the bowels of the earth. On the austere plain that forms the interior of South Africa, adventurers who had failed to make good in Vilna, Budapest or Birmingham met Boers whose produce had withered on the fields, and whose enterprise had withered with it. Desperation and adventure were the two main themes in the symphony.

Out of the mercantile and industrial age arose magnificent cultures. But in South Africa the precarious economic base of gold and diamonds—the Renaissance and Reformation in her national evolution—and the spirit of the fortune-hunter which this base generated, have given rise to a culture that is frail. For

its roots are in the diamond diggings sprawling over thousands of square miles in desert lands more arid than Arizona, and in the gold-mining camps redolent of the Wild West.

Clusters of people from every part of the world settled around these gold and diamond mines. But these did not constitute towns or cities; they altogether lacked the cultural attributes of the city. There was a spirit of impermanence animating this cosmopolitan stream of persons who came to fill their pockets and then return to their homes overseas. The place teemed with people bent on short cuts to opulence. As some wag put it—discussing the early days when Johannesburg was a roaring, wide-open mining camp—through some of the whimsicalities of the Roman-Dutch law, some ways of making money were regarded as being less legitimate than others. All this explains why, no matter how many skyscrapers spring up to give a new skyline to Johannesburg, the mine dumps will continue to stand colourfully on the horizon, reminding us that Johannesburg's is the undying spirit of the mining town, born of large freedoms and given to flamboyant forms of expression. And that explains why the politics of South Africa are so seething and formless. Many things are happening, but there is little stability, permanence or theme—unless the incessant clamour of the Nationalist cymbals, jarring on the ears of the world, can be called a theme.

The 1922 miners' strike was a watershed in South African history no less important than the Boer War. It shaped our national evolution for years to come.* The Rand revolt was crushed by Smuts; but, as in the case of the Boer War, the defeat was retrieved on the political plane. The Labour Party, representing the interests of the white worker, united with the Nationalist Party, the defenders of white nationalism, and ousted Smuts from power in 1924.

One cannot but admire the grit of the Afrikaner nation which had enabled them to rise from the ashes of ruin and fight their

* See pp. 98-125.

way to victory. Fate had shaken them out of its sleeve in a region naturally destitute of benign influences. Fear and bitterness were their main companions in life. And we must salute a people, of whom a large portion languished in despair on the land but who have acquired over the year the skills and resource to make a major contribution in every field of national endeavour. They are a people that possess many other qualities, which one is prone to overlook because of their intractability in a situation calling for skill and manoeuvrability. For even the extreme Afrikaner is, on the whole, a kindly, humane person when he is away from the political hustings, and his fears of the 'black peril' are momentarily dispelled.

Both the Nationalists and the Labour Party supported segregation, the forerunner of *apartheid*, but they achieved much in the way of developing secondary industries to render the country less dependent on Britain. In imperial matters, the government pursued a centrifugal policy—not aggressively so, for Hertzog's aim was to co-operate with the English section on a basis of a broad South African nationalism. Also, between 1924 and 1929 the predominantly English Labour Party acted as a counterweight to any extremism on the part of the Nationalists in matters relating to the Empire, if not to the African.

This period saw a new influx of many poor whites, almost totally Afrikaner, from the countryside into the factories of the cities. Whether they would remain Nationalist, the dominant *Weltanschauung* in our countryside, or be moulded into a city proletariat by their new environmental pressures, was now a question of some political importance. It assumed even greater importance when, with the rise of Hitler, the Nationalists began to veer in the direction of Nazism.

The 1929 general election revealed much of sociological significance. Raising the garish standard of segregation, strongly peppered with 'black peril' propaganda, the Nationalists were

able to gain a clear majority and felt themselves no longer trammelled by the moderating influences of the Labour Party, which had lost votes and soon went into total decline. The poor whites from the countryside remained staunchly Nationalist despite their new-found proletarian status, and they helped to strengthen Afrikanerdom in the towns, where in the past it had never had a proper foothold. Whatever else the Nationalist Party failed to do, it retrieved masses of Afrikaners from degradation and decay, and gave them a proper footing in life. The lost legions of the desolate countryside were making good economically and politically. These lowly peasants, who had been ground between the upper millstone of the English and the nether millstone of the African, raised their heads high. The extreme wing of the Nationalists applied itself to the task of moving further away from the Empire and protecting the white worker in his new industrial preserves against any encroachments from the blacks. In the 1929 election I heard a Nationalist orator declaim: 'We must go back to the days of Paul Kruger, who had it on the statute-book: Here the black man ends, and the white man begins.' And back to the good old days of Paul Kruger they went. It was in this period that E. S. (Solly) Sachs came into prominence with his fight against the colour bar in the trade unions and its political implications.*

The downfall of Smuts

The Fusion government of Smuts and Hertzog was a dichotomous political organism, subject to a good many strains and stresses; but on the whole it worked. A spirit of accommodation obtained on internal matters such as Segregation, where Smuts was prepared to make concessions in view of the danger zone into which the world was moving with Hitler's ascendancy. The horse of Segregation was traded for the horse of imperialism, but

* See pp. 133-45.

there were reservations—neither animal was a thoroughbred. At times Smuts went a little too far, and he met resistance from his chief lieutenant, Jan Hofmeyr, who led the Liberal wing in the Fusion government. A bursting point was reached when Hertzog clashed with Hofmeyr, who was forced out of the Cabinet. Oswald Pirow, Minister of Defence and Hertzog's right-hand man, was a great admirer of Hitler. Impetuous and arrogant by nature, he scarcely took the trouble to hide the fact. Worse still, he brought Hertzog over to his way of thinking. Hertzog and Pirow bent their every effort to see that the Chamberlain-Munich line triumphed. In September 1939 they clashed with Smuts on the question of South Africa's entry into the war, were comfortably defeated in Parliament, and Smuts took over the government by himself. In 1943 Smuts easily held his own in the general election, and he looked set for a clear victory in 1948 when, to everyone's surprise, including that of the Nationalists themselves, he lost by a fateful three seats. Smuts's party had in fact polled more votes, but it is one of our electoral anomalies that rural constituencies, predominantly Afrikaner, carry a 15 per cent load in their favour.

A number of reasons have been advanced for Smuts's defeat in 1948—organizational and programmatic laxity, for instance. In my view these were of secondary importance. The basic reason was the awakening of the coloured races throughout the world and its impact on the black national movement in South Africa. The manner in which the coloured countries were asserting themselves at the United Nations and hammering South Africa was all grist to the mill of the extreme Afrikaner Nationalists. The 'black peril' was no longer an election cry—the menace was real and it had to be met with an iron hand. And that is how matters stand today—except that the greatest peril comes from beyond the borders of South Africa, as the agitation about boycotts and sanctions gathers momentum.

It is sad to think that a goodly number of Afrikaners who were

ready to sacrifice everything, including their lives, in the war against Hitler should have returned victorious and given their votes to the party that worked sedulously and unremittingly for their defeat. And they did so because they believed they were being saved from the menace of the black man. How potent and magical is the word 'kaffir' in South Africa. It works wonders. Let us draw what comfort we can from the knowledge that right down the ages men have gone off to war in the name of causes and aims even more confused and cynical.

What is the explanation for General Smuts's eclipse? An ancillary question is—could he have avoided it?

For one thing, he possessed a very fine intellect which he was loth to waste on what he must have considered parochial South African matters. The span of his wings was too large for it, and he tried to fulfil himself on the world stage. What did the price of mealies and Native passes matter, when there was a League of Nations to build? South Africa was all very well as a springboard, but he needed a base of proper dimensions and nearer the heart of things from which to operate. The British Empire made him welcome, and he was ready to utilize his opportunities to the limit. There passes through my mind at this moment the image of him in the presence of King George VI and the Queen when they visited South Africa in 1947. His demeanour was humble, even obsequious, as if he was still the shepherd boy from the Cape mountains. And this was the man of steel who had struck terror into the eternally recalcitrant and rebellious Boers. His greatest achievement in our national affairs was that he kept order. And that is no mean achievement, for South Africa is no kindergarden. But sociologically, his contribution was meagre.

The truth of the matter is that he was bitten by the imperial bug. That is what imperial grandeur does to the lowly who have risen. In the 1922 Rand revolt he was a little too enthusiastic in his support of the British mineowners, and brought down on his

head the violent hatred, not only of the Nationalist Afrikaners who had opposed him all along but also of the militant British workers who had emigrated to this country in fairly large numbers. This led to his defeat in 1924, when the Nationalists under General Hertzog and the English-dominated Labour Party under Colonel Creswell joined forces and ousted him.

As far back as 1906 he wrote of the Native problem in this country: 'When I consider the political future of the Natives in South Africa I must say that I look into shadows and darkness; and then I feel inclined to shift the intolerable burden of solving that sphinx problem to the ampler shoulders and stronger brains of the future.'

Thirty years after, he felt very much the same. No doubt he thought that if the League of Nations was a success, such beneficences would rain down on the whole of mankind, including South Africa, that to divert time to anything else was wasteful. Well, the League has come and gone. And now it is the United Nations which is bringing us benefits untold—but not so that Dr Verwoerd would notice it.

Smuts's indifference to sociological matters finally led to his undoing, and to a disastrous turn in the affairs of South Africa. For at the end of the second world war he was faced with the staggering problem of the rise of African nationalism, for which he had hardly prepared himself.

Agriculture lies mostly in the hands of the Afrikaners, and it is on the social and economic level of the feudal American Southern States before the Civil War. In some ways Smuts's position resembled that of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, when the struggle between the liberal industrialists of America and the feudal planters had reached a critical point. But there are important differences that helped to defeat Smuts where Lincoln was victorious. In America the slaves were a negligible force in relation to the whites. In South Africa the blacks outnumber the

whites by four to one; they are growing in strength, and are beginning to constitute a threat to the white man's hegemony. Until recently they were politically inarticulate.

In America the industrialists were Lincoln's main support. But the economy of South Africa has tended to strengthen the feudal elements. The Master and Servants Act is the basis of agriculture. The gold-mining industry, linked to Britain and therefore politically an important pillar for the Smuts policy, is itself based on indentured labour. In secondary industry the colour bar is still a decisive factor, with the white worker determined to keep the African from encroaching on his skilled preserves. And this applies to both the English and Afrikaner workers. With the expansion of South Africa's economy, skilled labour will have to be drawn from the Coloured and black sections, and this will furnish the basis for a realistic liberal policy. The mining interests, which are beginning to invest in secondary industry and are ready to face the economic and political facts of life, are adopting a more progressive policy towards black labour even in the face of government opposition. But this factor did not operate during the Smuts régime, when the spirit of liberalism which began to manifest itself was largely sentimental.

Another important factor which contributed to Smuts's defeat was the weakening of the British Empire, from which he drew all his *élan* in his struggle with Afrikaner nationalism. Smuts was a disappointed man at the end of his life. It was very moving to see this man of real stature pitting himself in Parliament against an Opposition mainly representative of the farming community, whose political philosophy is constituted of two components: black labour at the cheapest price—this is the economic reality behind the racial myths—and the marketing of produce at the dearest. Smuts was defeated by the 'black peril' agitation they let loose. The post-war world, with the United Nations and the ascendancy of the coloured races, gave this agitation the necessary momentum. Not all his political skill and prestige could contain it.

Smuts's life was not easy. Such was his fervent belief in the capacity of the British Empire to guide civilization that he was prepared to break with his whole past when he chose the new road. It more than once brought him into conflict with his erstwhile comrades who had fought by his side in the Boer War, and left behind searing memories. In 1914, when war broke out, many of the Boers went into rebellion and joined the Germans. It was his task to subdue them.

Like the liberals everywhere, Smuts was confounded by the turbulence of this chaotic age and the specific problems inherent in the South African scene. He failed to remove many obstacles that blocked the forward advance of his country, because he could not muster the necessary social energy from the nation to remove the very heavy hand of the past. The nation does not possess it as yet. Such is the balance of social tensions within South Africa that without the impact of the outside world, which is beginning to make itself increasingly felt, the country would remain stagnant for ever. In an age where crude nationalism began to run rampant, the internationalist Smuts was defeated by the narrow nationalists.

If Smuts had not spent himself in fighting two wars outside South Africa, he might have mustered sufficient energy to play the role of a local Lincoln—that is, finally wrest power from the planters and place it in the hands of the progressive industrialists, where it belongs. But even so, the position need not have taken such a disastrous turn if he had displayed more acumen and political foresight in the early forties. This was the time when he was riding the crest of a wave, and he could have effected certain constitutional changes which would have kept the country from slipping back, as it did in 1948. The Nationalists have since shown us how the State apparatus can be used to make favourable adjustments of all kinds. The loading of the country constituencies is preposterous, when you consider the economic contribution of the hinterland to the country's welfare. An adjustment here

would have prevented the Nationalists from gaining a victory in 1948. A vigorous immigration policy would have ended their hopes for ever, and spared us the ordeal through which we are now passing. It did not help matters that amongst Smuts's lieutenants there was not one who came anywhere near to measuring up to him. Electoral changes alone could not have solved the problem of a rising African nationalism; but they would have left the road open for a solution, where now it is heavily blocked.

In a way it was not accidental that Smuts failed to make the electoral changes which would have prevented a Nationalist victory in 1948. He was so confident of success that he did not think it worth while to do anything to offend his right wing, which hailed from the countryside, and which would have resented any moves to diminish the power of the rural constituencies. Throughout his career this right wing acted as a brake on any progressive legislation, and Smuts kowtowed to it unduly. This section deserted to extreme Nationalism, when, with the rise of the 'black peril' after the second world war, a firmer hand was required, which Smuts could not furnish because of his affiliations with world liberal opinion.

The other factor which inhibited him was psychological. In the early part of his career he had built up a reputation for hardness and inhumanity, which he wanted to live down as the end of his career was approaching. He was determined to make a good exit. And that is why he acted with lassitude against the forces that were openly working for a Hitler victory. Instead of destroying them politically once and for all, when he had the power to do so, he treated them deferentially and left them intact, so that they could rally after the war and overthrow him.

Occasionally Smuts was presented with an opportunity for giving public utterance to sentiments that lie outside of the range of politics. It is then we see his full stature. Such an occasion was the funeral of a friend. He spoke eloquently of life, in that place

where it is most fitting that life should be spoken of—at the graveside. There was the dignity of human sorrow, old and strangely disturbing, in that speech. And the melancholy grandeur that is Man. Here are its concluding words: ‘We remain to face the mystery of life, the tragedy of suffering. He who knows the secret has told us that it is love. With this assurance, in this faith, we move forward with heads erect and hearts unafraid to whatever may await us in the future. We continue to carry on the burden and the struggle until the day dawns for us, too, and the shadows flee.’

Smuts’s own life was not lacking in genuine tragedy.

Dr Verwoerd the Prophet

During the years that followed, the Nationalist Party took every conceivable step—political, economic, educational, military—to entrench themselves in power for ever. They denuded the countryside of manpower to pack the Senate, which was their main instrument for circumventing the Constitution. For a two-thirds majority in a joint sitting of both Houses is needed to amend it. The Senate Hall, brimming with sturdy rustics tramping on each other’s toes, must have found the congestion unendurable after the wide open spaces of the South African countryside. But their hands, many of them callused from the plough, went up with military precision when ordered to do so, and they ran furrows through the South African Constitution. Senators are appointed by the Government. The rest was pie—and arithmetic.

The leadership of the Nationalist Party was in the hands of the aging Dr D. F. Malan, a cultured man who had gained his doctorate at a Dutch university with a thesis on the English philosopher Bishop Berkeley. He had won his prestige through a vigorous crusade on behalf of the evolving Afrikaans language, in the shaping of which he played a big part. In politics he was a

Cape conservative, as opposed to the extremism of the Transvaal Nationalists. Here it is necessary to say something about this dichotomy characterising the Nationalist Party. For under the pressure of events, external and internal, the Party may split along this seam.

There are historical and other circumstances to explain the moderation of the Cape Nationalists. The Cape is the whole of that fertile belt of vineyards and wheat moving intrepidly right up to the aridity of the karroo. If you are driving down from the north, De Doorns suddenly comes upon you as you round the bend of the mountain, and you feel that you have entered some other Eden. There is a slower rhythm about the Cape, a placidity that emanates from this southern paradise. But it is not only its Mediterranean climate, trees and Table Mountain that give Cape Town its placid character. There is also an historical explanation. When the Trekkers left the Cape some one hundred and twenty years ago they took a lot of bitterness with them. Those who remained behind were prepared to balance out the bitterness of British conquest with the sweetness of their vineyards and their wheatfields. All the savage racial clashes that are a feature of South African history were fought out in the north—and they have left an indelible mark. It is a bitterness which became sublimated—if this term may be used for something so earth-bound—in the persons of such men as Mr Strydom and Dr Verwoerd. In a moment of doubt and hesitation, Dr Dönges, leader of the Cape Nationalists, once sighfully quoted Hamlet in public: 'The times are out of joint. . . . Oh cursed spite, that I was born to put it right.' This is the sentiment of a southerner—no northerner would countenance it. They are ready to tackle the world—it looks as if they will have to.

As to the present, economic and demographic circumstances do not conduce to political extremism in the Cape. The Cape farmers are on the whole prosperous, and the pressure from the African is negligible. The labour force of Cape Town and its

environs is made up almost entirely of whites—and Coloureds who are indigenous to this region. There are no more than 20,000 Africans around these parts, which is just about the number that pour out of the factories of one Johannesburg street when their day is done. Not even a raving Nationalist—and there are quite a few about—has suggested that the Coloureds should be removed. But that may still come. The Cape Afrikaners are on the whole staid, and they cannot possibly get themselves to become enthusiastic about the grandiose schemes of the Transvaalers involving mass migration of Africans—and the possible loss of their export markets, which brought about the downfall of the Nationalists in 1933.

Their loyalty to Nationalism is rooted in the struggle against the English, who took their independence from them. As far as the African is concerned, their policy does not differ so materially from that of General Smuts. Where Smuts was prepared to let evolution take its course, with the emphasis on gradualness, they would like things to congeal. They were never happy about the adventures, schemes and dreams of the Transvaalers, who were determined to turn the clock back even if every spring and screw were shattered in the process. That was why, under the premiership of Dr Malan, the leader of the Transvaalers, Mr J. G. Strydom, was relegated to the minor portfolio of the Ministry of Lands and Irrigation. When Strydom succeeded Dr Malan, he returned the compliment by relegating the senior Cape man Paul Sauer to the same Ministry of Lands and Irrigation. Again, when Dr Malan was about to retire, he manœuvred very skillfully to place the leadership of the Cape Nationalists in the hands of Dr Dönges and not Eric Louw—who, although a Cape man, sides with the Transvaalers. But then Mr Louw comes from Beaufort West, a Cape dorp in the heart of the karroo. And if you have lived in the karroo, anything can happen to you. It is common knowledge that the Cape Nationalists were strongly opposed to Dr Verwoerd becoming Prime Minister when

Strydom died. And, significantly enough, in the republican referendum the voting in the Cape was 271,418 for a Republic, and 269,784 against, a majority of only 1,634.

The Transvaalers gained an important victory when Strydom and not Dr Dönges, Dr. Malan's protégé, became Prime Minister. The way was open for Draconian measures designed to halt the black menace. Strydom's favourite word was 'baasskap', the essence of which is the *Herrenvolk* principle. The kaffir was to be kept in his place. To Strydom this political epitome was metaphorical. To Dr Verwoerd it is both metaphorical and literal—the kaffir must also be shifted back to his original habitat, away from the white man whose nostrils are unendurably offended by his presence. But this offensive sweat and grime of the 'kaffir' has gone into the farms, mines and factories—and brought the good things of life to the white man. 'I have had no sleepless nights about the Native problem,' Dr Verwoerd once said, 'because I know I am right.' A chemist friend of mine tells me that since Sharpeville his sale of sleep-inducing tablets has gone up by leaps and bounds. Presumably there are people who think Dr Verwoerd is wrong.

Strydom was the earthy, realistic farmer who made it his main business to prevent any jacqueries breaking out. The horizons of our farms are broad, those of our farmers limited. Dr Verwoerd is the visionary and prophet, with dreams and schemes of Bantustans in the Native Reserves, and much else—which may satisfy a Senate packed with Nationalist supporters, but not the United Nations packed with ever multiplying black States. I have heard Africans salute each other with 'See you in Bantustan', the way the Jews included the words 'See you in Jerusalem' in their prayers during their lengthy exile. The Jews were serious; the Africans have a mocking smile playing over their faces.

What manner of man is Dr Verwoerd? There can be little doubt

as to his intellectual capacity—by South African standards. A Nationalist professor has rated him as mentally superior to every South African Prime Minister except General Smuts. My own impression is that he is not within range of Smuts, and I am not sure about his measuring up to Dr D. F. Malan, who had much in reserve which he withheld from the public. I would not lightly dismiss a scholar who could write a thesis on Berkeley. Dr Verwoerd has presence, and also character, if this term is taken to connote massive unyielding strength, and not benignity, which appears to have been eliminated by his obsessiveness. For Dr Verwoerd is obsessive—in his attitude to the African at all events. That is the view of Dr Ben Marais, leading Afrikaans theologian and Professor of Christian History at the Pretoria University, and one-time pupil of Dr Verwoerd at Stellenbosch University.* Dr Marais found him to be a highly intellectual man and a competent professor, with a very retentive mind. He could dictate his lectures freely, without a note in front of him, and resume the next day at the point where he had left off. 'I found him pleasant, but too impetuous, and he had an obsessive one-track approach to all matters appertaining to race and colour,' said Dr Marais. 'I cannot say that I liked him.'

Dr Jan Steytler, leader of the Progressive Party, told me categorically that Dr Verwoerd was wedded to Nazi doctrine during Hitler's heyday—and that he still is. Dr Marais is equally sure that he was, but is not prepared to commit himself about Dr Verwoerd's present attitude. There can be no doubt about his Nazi professions during Hitler's ascendancy—he proclaimed it daily in the newspaper he edited. But he never had truck with the 'shirt' movements—which confirms the impression that he was more enamoured of Hitler's *Herrenvolk* principle than of his anti-Semitism. Dr Verwoerd, who speaks his mind openly, has never attacked the Jews, so far as either Dr Marais or I can recollect. It seems that the hatred he feels towards the African is

* See pp. 148-56.

so furious that there is not much over for anyone else. During his premiership his attitude to the Jews has been unexceptionable—whether for reasons of policy, or out of conviction, I am not able to say. Like so many Nazi supporters, when he was confronted during the war with the question of Hitler's genocide directed at the Jews, his explanation was that you cannot make omelets without breaking eggs. That it was six million heads and not eggs that were broken was at the time dismissed as not of sufficient significance in the midst of so momentous an upheaval. 'Russia is our Africa, and the Russians our Negroes,' Hitler said to Professor Oberlander in July 1941. There is little doubt that Dr Verwoerd, like Hitler, drew his *Herrenvolk* inspiration from Nietzsche—wrongly, of course—and that he assimilated quite a deal of Gobineau, Houston Chamberlain and kindred racial demonologists.

Dr Verwoerd was born in Holland, and is not an Afrikaner. But his case is not unique. Napoleon was a Corsican, and Hitler an Austrian. It would seem that a stage is reached in the evolution of a nation when it feels itself incapable of rallying the necessary forces to move forward in the face of grave peril, and that it then draws on an outsider who, because he is not rooted in its soil and its past, is capable of more reckless action. And he is usually treated as a saviour or miracle man. There has been quite a deal of talk recently about Dr Verwoerd's being divinely inspired. One Nationalist legislator even described him as the greatest statesman who ever lived. Family background cannot have played a decisive part in the formation of Dr Verwoerd's ideological outlook, for his brother, also a professor, is a United Party man who fought in the war.

In his speeches and in parliamentary debates Dr Verwoerd is fluent, resourceful and arrogant. The texture is legal and logical, and when an attempt is made at the aesthetic, it is deplorable—'Our troubles will keep mounting like a snowball gathering more and more snow.'

Dr Verwoerd's name is inseparably linked with *apartheid*. He has dedicated all his energies to this hallowed cause. Like the axis on which the world turns, South African politics has during the last forty years revolved about the imaginary axis of *apartheid*, or Segregation, as it was originally called. The Nationalists won one election after another with the 'black' magic. It was never regarded as anything but fictitious, and for election purposes only. Once the elections were over, the ballot papers were pitched into the bins and everybody forgot all about *apartheid*—until the next election, that is. But the Young Turks of the Nationalist Party, under the guidance and inspiration of Dr Verwoerd, are actually trying to apply it to the economic life of the country. The dislocations that have already resulted are bound to multiply. Since the Nationalists have come into power, more Africans have entered industry than ever before. That is the devastating fact.

There is a semblance of reality about *apartheid* today, where there was none before, because a new set of circumstances have arisen. The danger from the blacks is real, and not the mythical 'black peril' it was when its sole purpose was to bring voters to the polling booths, not Africans to the Reserves. And there are the prying eyes of a critical world to see what is actually happening. Not much is happening. According to the Tomlinson Report—the chairman was a government supporter—£100 million would be required over ten years to implement the government programme. After being twelve years in office, the government, under the pressure of Sharpeville, has voted £10 million to start industries along the borders of the Reserves. And the Report rejected as quixotic the attempt to remove the African from the urban areas. The conclusions did not differ materially from that of the inquiry held under the chairmanship of Mr H. A. Fagan, a Hertzog man who was Minister of Native Affairs in the Fusion government, joined Dr D. F. Malan when Fusion broke up and, until recently, was Chief Justice of the Union. But myths,

which derive from the depths of the unconscious, do not have to conform to logic.

There are many interesting aspects to *apartheid*. Since Dr Verwoerd is a visionary, why not visions of imperial grandeur? The Bantustans are in the nature of colonies, and not long ago Commissioner-Generals were appointed to the five Bantustans. One of them, Hans Abrahams, once told a Member of Parliament, who wore his war medals at some celebration, that he had decorated himself like a kaffir bicycle. A neat touch for a pro-consul!

Afrikaner capital needs areas for further expansion. New pastures are being sought where, with preferential treatment from the government, Afrikaner capital will be able to hold its own against the English and Jewish competitor. Since the main purpose behind these enterprises is not to develop the Reserves, as recommended by the Tomlinson Report, but to have a plentiful supply of African cheap labour, the factories are being erected on the European border-side of the Reserves. Locations will be built near enough to the border to enable this labour force daily to cross to work in the white-owned factories on the other side. Already, owing to lower production costs (chiefly wages, which are very low indeed) factories in the established industrial areas have been savagely undercut, especially in the garment industry. And there has been a nation-wide uproar. The Nationalist Empire is on the move.

There has been a great deal of dispute as to whether the Nationalists are sincere in their *apartheid* policy of sending the Africans packing to their natural home—or whether it is just a way to spoof the world and the United Nations. In this connexion it is worth quoting a statement by Mr Tom Naude, the Minister of the Interior. Says Mr Naude:

The decentralization of industry to the border areas will result in a happier existence of the Bantu workers. The present state of affairs, as a result of which business is concentrated in half a dozen principal centres of the Union,

means that the Bantu workers have to travel long distances from their homes and enter a new environment and mode of living which are so diametrically opposed to the life they are accustomed to in their Reserves. They find it difficult to settle down, and this factor often leads to the breaking up of their family life.

There is a genuine note of commiseration for the African here. Now there is an easy way for Dr Verwoerd to prove his sincerity about *apartheid*, which aims to control the influx of Africans into the towns and ultimately to shift the urban Africans back to their natural habitat. In this democratic twentieth century, these shifts of population by decree are naturally arousing widespread resentment. There is a way out that would disarm the critics. Let Dr Verwoerd develop the industries around and in the Reserves, so that they will be a magnet to draw the urban African back to his home and hearth—without any compulsion of any kind.

There are also a number of individual psychological traits of Dr Verwoerd's which have given a certain character to *apartheid*. It is well known that Dr Verwoerd would not allow an African to darken his threshold, any more than Hitler would have allowed a Jew to do so. He employs no African servants. And one can see that the purpose behind *apartheid* is to drive the African from the threshold of the land—anywhere, so that he can have full sovereign rights, walk across the open spaces under a wide sky, and choke in his new-found independence. It is really a form of escaping responsibility. The word *apartheid* means separation. But 'elimination' would be more suitable. Dr Verwoerd would like to eliminate the African from the national organism—that is the essential feature of *apartheid*.

Tsarist Russia had some kind of link with the peasants, mainly through the Church. They even called the Tsar Little Father. Admittedly the Little Father often chastised them. But there is not even this slender link between Dr Verwoerd and the Africans. They are alien, unwanted. They must get the hell out of it. But that is not going to be so easy.

The African is the decisive factor in the country's destiny. He is a force to be reckoned with. A hundred years ago things were much simpler. There was the river; the blacks would come charging with their assegais, and they would be met by the accurate fire-power of the Boer trekkers entrenched in their wagon-fortresses on the other side of the river. There was genuine *apartheid*, with the river as the line of demarcation. But things are different today. The line of demarcation has become very blurred. The African is an integral part of industry—and he has come to stay. Industry would not survive without him. These are the facts, whatever the myths. Despite all the efforts to bar his way, he has important industrial levers in his hands, and not an assegai.

The artificial *apartheid* barriers are resulting in racial collisions which are disturbing the roots of the nation. At Cato Manor the enraged Zulu women slew nine policemen and mutilated their bodies. That is what they thought of the government's police. At Sharpeville the police responded with their deadly fusillade. And so it was that one fateful day the open space in front of Sharpeville police station represented petrified panic and flight, the dead bodies drawn in a strange kind of intimacy with the earth. One wounded man was sitting upright—the vivid spot in the painting to bring focus to the pattern. Two days later, seventy-odd coffins, the mourners at their head, were neatly laid out in the open field, one next to the other. They faded into the distance—and into eternity.

Justifying the use of force, Dr Verwoerd once said: 'A soft doctor allows the wound to putrefy.' But a harsh doctor can allow the whole body to go cold.

There will be more Cato Manors and more Sharpevilles—unless South Africa can change direction without delay.

The Road from Sharpeville

Divisions among the Nationalists

THE SHARPEVILLE tragedy shook both the whole country and the Nationalist Party. Of that there cannot be the least doubt. Neither can there be any doubt that it is the Cape Nationalists who are beginning to feel restive. The attempt on Dr Verwoerd's life made them close ranks, but not to such an extent as to obliterate differences—and these differences could not be suppressed. The first evidence of tension within the party came when the caucus had to elect an acting Prime Minister during Dr Verwoerd's absence. The obvious choice was Mr P. O. Sauer, the senior member of the Cabinet. But his election would have constituted a tactical victory for the Cape moderates, with whom Mr Sauer is generally linked, and he was appointed chairman of the Cabinet by virtue of his seniority. The caucus announcement expressly carried the statement that no acting Prime Minister had been elected to replace Dr Verwoerd.

Subsequent public declarations on major policy by various Ministers underlined the disagreements inside the Cabinet. The juxtaposition of two public addresses—one by Mr Sauer and the other by Mr de Wet Nel, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and a die-hard supporter of Dr Verwoerd—makes this abundantly clear. They were delivered the same day, one month after Sharpeville, when enough time had elapsed for calm reflection on this tragedy. Speaking at Humansdorp, Mr Sauer said:

The old book of South African history was closed a month ago at Sharpeville and, for the immediate future, South Africa will reconsider in earnest

and honesty her whole approach to the Native question. We must create a new spirit which must restore overseas faith—both white and non-white—in South Africa. There must be an important change in the practical application of government policy, although it will not mean a deviation from set policy. Pinpricks which have ripened the Natives for propaganda by the African National Congress and the Pan-African Congress will now be removed. We should let the Native feel that the reference book is of value to him. Until now it has been only a source of worry. He should be made to realize that it supplies him with rights, privileges and safety. The application of liquor laws in locations will also have to be altered. At present the police cannot apply them. It has been a source of frustration to the Native, and the numerous liquor raids have made him feel inferior. He feels as if he is being chased around. Better relations will have to be established between white and non-white. Immediate attention must be given to higher wages for Natives who work in urban industries. Industrialists should prepare themselves for this and also get rid of unnecessary Native labourers. The solution will be higher productivity. Overseas action could have serious economic repercussions for South Africa. Economic sanctions could be applied. There is only one way to avoid this—a better attitude to the Natives. The biggest fear of the Afrikaner has always been the supposition that immigrants will be used to plough the Afrikaner under. This approach to immigration will have to change.

And here is the address of Mr de Wet Nel, delivered at Stellenbosch:

We pay far too much attention to the foreign winds of world opinion and the so-called setbacks on the stock market. Unfortunately there are some of our own people and our own newspapers who get into a state of panic about these things. They play into the hands of these elements. I am convinced that the policy of *apartheid* will serve as a model to the world for the establishment of good race relations. The question could be asked of me: What are the relations today between whites and Bantu under the policy of *apartheid*? My answer is very definitely that never before in the history of South Africa has the Bantu population shown so great a spirit of co-operation with, and trust in, the white man. What of the recent disturbances? Let me point out that barely two per cent of the Bantu population were involved in the disturbances, and most of them were the victims of organized gangs who forced them into these actions at the point of the knife and the pistol.

And this, after the government had been compelled to bring

out the Army to restore normal conditions. Mr Eric Louw, another extremist, said in an interview over the BBC that there would be no change of policy. Just like that. Only the elimination of pinpricks would be gone into.

There is not only a vast difference of approach between the two statements in tone and overtone, but also in basic Nationalist policy. Mr Sauer denies basic differences, but that is only the heretic making the sign of the cross because the time for more resolute action has not yet arrived. The Transvaalers regard any reference to the future of the urban Africans as taboo, for their policy is to transfer them as if by magic wand to the Bantustans in their Reserves. It must also be borne in mind that Mr Sauer was restricted in his pronouncements by joint Cabinet responsibility, but *Die Burger*, official organ of the Cape Nationalists, kicked over the party traces and came out with the declaration that South Africa had suffered an external catastrophe, and that it was now being everywhere regarded as the skunk of the world. This explains Mr de Wet Nel's reference to the state of panic of Nationalist newspapers.

It remains to be said that the Cape Nationalists have tentative backing from certain Transvaal Ministers, a number of whom are connected with Afrikaner financial houses who cannot be as indifferent as Mr de Wet Nel to the 'so-called setbacks on the stock market'. These 'so-called setbacks' amounted to a 25 per cent depreciation, and to £600 million. It is of further significance that nearly half the Nationalist Members of Parliament sat tight-lipped during the whole of the Sharpeville aftermath, and left the floor to the ranting bunch from the Transvaal. The only possible explanation is that they are biding their time to see how events shape themselves.

There is not another political party in the world which could have withstood the battering of Sharpeville and its repercussions throughout the world. And yet the Nationalists have managed to

hold together despite stresses and strains. Theirs is more than a political party—it is a national movement. A stage has been reached when they must stand their ground, or go under for ever. They are sustained by the knowledge that, if they go under, all their sufferings and all their struggles as a nation will have been in vain—with black ascendancy as the future. That is their propaganda line, even if it is nowhere in accordance with the facts.

Firm action by the United Nations against South Africa would bring about the end of Verwoerdism, and a coalition of the moderates from the United Party and the Nationalist Party would in all likelihood take over. Mr H. A. Fagan, former Chief Justice of the Union, is waiting in the wings. I devote a special section to him and his policy,* so I will confine myself here to saying that his prestige stands high both among the English and the Afrikaner. But it is unlikely that he could form a bridge to moderate African opinion. A coalition headed by Mr Fagan could, in my view, be only a transition stage to a government under the Progressive Party, to whose leader, Dr Jan Steytler, I also devote a section.† With its policy of a vote for every civilized man, white or black, the way should be open for an understanding with African moderate opinion, of which Chief Albert Luthuli is the most outstanding representative. It is the one hope of avoiding a situation that may lead to disaster.

This brings us to a matter of cardinal importance—the overseas approach to the local situation.

As others see us

The pose of injured innocence assumed by the Nationalist government in the face of criticism from abroad can be readily dismissed. It is true that, as is the way of newspapermen, stories cabled to their papers are peppered up. Substantially the news

* See pp. 51–63.

† See pp. 63–76.

coverage of the local scene has not been such as to give a distorted view of the situation. But here it is as well to say that many of the *views* expressed by overseas papers have been neither helpful nor accurate. *Apartheid* and its ugly proliferations are as repugnant to about half of the whites in South Africa as they are to the world at large, and no good purpose will be served by lumping every white man together with Dr Verwoerd. It is neither fair nor expedient. For it is the one way of driving the white man into the Verwoerdian camp, if only to save his skin.

It is, for instance, blatantly false to state that the South African English Press has not attacked the Nationalists, or to make the patently inaccurate assertion that the Chamber of Mines is playing a reactionary role. This is schematism, and certain Left publications are the worst offenders. The English Press has been unrelenting in its attack on government policy, so much so that Nationalist Members of Parliament are calling for its suppression. Whether the Chamber of Mines is actuated by morality in attacking the government is not our concern for the moment. But the fact is that Verwoerdism threatens to ruin the economy of the country, in which the Chamber of Mines is heavily involved—and to dislodge him they would move heaven, and more earth than they have moved since they started the gold mines. Dr Verwoerd has been so arrogant and thoughtless in his handling of the African question that an all-out sympathy from abroad for the black man is understandable. But this sympathy should not be carried so far that every white man, whatever his opinions, is viewed in the same sullen light. There is a whole lot of factitious liberal sentiment abroad that just does not connect up with reality here. It is much easier to say things 7,000 miles away than to do them here in the midst of gathering tension. To raise the cry of immediate and full equality for the African is tantamount to calling for a full social revolution in South Africa, or for power to be placed in the hands of the Pan-Africanists, the black variety of Verwoerdism.

We have already seen in the Congo the disastrous dislocations that can follow on the handing over of a civilization, even one based on a primitive agrarian economy, to a people not ready to assume control over it, through no fault of their own. And South Africa is a fairly highly developed industrial economy, where the chaos would be unending if a similar transfer were attempted before the time was ripe. The lesson from the Congo is not that the black man is a barbarian for ever unfit to play his part in society, but that the necessary steps should be taken to prepare him for it—to open avenues to enable him to evolve towards full citizenship, and not to have these avenues blocked by artificial barriers, as Dr Verwoerd is trying to do.

South Africa's position is sociologically not as unique as it appears to be. The pattern is recognizable throughout history. Our problem is to make the transition from a feudal to a capitalist democratic society, the same problem as faced Russia in 1917, and, to a certain extent, the British ruling class at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The racial division here complicates the scene. But the difference is of degree, and not of kind. The Russian nobility had the same contempt for the peasant as the English aristocracy had for the working class raising its head with the Industrial Revolution. And it is this contempt that Dr Verwoerd has for the African.

The problem in South Africa—and it has been a problem right through the ages—is that of a ruling class which has to meet the demands of lower orders that are growing more powerful with the evolution of a society. A classical example is perhaps the struggle between the Roman Empire and a Christianity increasing the sweep of its authority. Emperor Constantine thought no more of the Christians after he saw the fiery cross in the heavens than he did before it. But such was the changing correlation of forces that he would have had to spend himself in keeping them at bay. So he decided to share political and economic

power with them—in the name of coexistence, blessed word. And he was right. Before Lord Acton said so, the Christian hierarchy became corrupt with power, and played their part in keeping the powers that be, the powers that be.

The English social situation in the nineteenth century offers intriguing parallels with present-day South Africa. With the Industrial Revolution, the British ruling classes had to face the pressure from the rising proletariat, which exploded into the Chartist movement and led to the Peterloo riots, the English equivalent of Sharpeville. Then, too, the question was primarily whether the vote should be given to the lower orders. Partial concessions had to be made in order to prevent open revolt. The difference of approach within the leadership of the English ruling class is interesting in the light of subsequent events. Macaulay, with Verwoerdian intransigence, regarded the workers as a tiger which would never be tamed, and he was against any concessions whatever. He opposed the Reform Bill of 1832. Walter Bagehot, slightly more reasonable, looked upon the British working class as a lion that might or might not be tamed one day, but the time for political concessions was not yet. Gladstone, under the guidance of John Stuart Mill, decided that a sop in the form of the vote would take the snarl out of this Cerberus. The second Reform Bill of 1867 was the result. And Gladstone proved right. With the growing power of the working class, the sop has admittedly been increased in the form of the Welfare State, but in return Cerberus looks about as menacing as Hugh Gaitskell. Coexistence between the classes, rudely interrupted by the 1926 General Strike, is still the order of the day, and will continue to be as long as capitalism can be made to work, and the workers get their share. They do not ask for very much. It is towards this state of coexistence between black and white that South Africa must move.

It is of interest to know that Dr L. I. Coertze, a Nationalist Member of Parliament and an expert on constitutional law, quoted

in Parliament from Walter Bagehot to justify Dr Verwoerd's policy of keeping the African out of Parliament: 'It is evident that our whole political machinery presupposes a people so fundamentally at one that they can safely afford to bicker, and so sure of their own moderation that they are not dangerously disturbed by the never-ending din of political conflict.'

The Doctor's own comment on the above is as follows: 'Mr Speaker, let me say this. If the franchise is extended it will simply mean that eventually the political power will shift from one racial group to another racial group, and there is no guarantee that anyone apart from that racial group will derive any advantage.'

Let him tell it to the Congolese marines. What the good Doctor did not tell us is that, in spite of the South African government's observance of constitutional law in the best English tradition, no country has in years been visited with such universal opprobrium. It is a pity the Africans do not know enough constitutional law. Ben Schoeman, Minister of Transport in Dr Verwoerd's Cabinet, is more direct in his approach to these matters. 'We must not give the Native the vote', he declared. 'For then if he makes demands we can call it revolution.' South Africa is really a splendid country for a training in political philosophy. They have no use here for the veneer of the English political world, and the efforts at simulation and dissimulation practised by the rulers of the advanced countries. We are in a way a microcosm of the human race. It enables us to get a synoptic view of mankind—and what you see is not too hot.

As Christopher Martin said in a recent BBC talk: 'Politics is properly an obsession only in emergent societies, whether Chartist England or contemporary Africa. In an affluent society such as ours, it properly takes its place as only one among a lot of possible interests.' Bernard Shaw put it even better. 'Nationalism,' he said, 'is like the bones of the body. When the organism is healthy you don't notice them.'

Yes, politics in England is one of a lot of possible interests. Nothing to get worked up about. Mr Martin catches here an essential overtone of British politics. But it was not always so. The British ruling class has in the past often adopted the methods of Verwoerdism and was overcome by the 'obsessions of contemporary Africa' with the Boer War, Amritsar in India, and the Black and Tans in Ireland. But it stands to its credit that it was capable of learning from its mistakes and sizing up reality—when a certain line can be held, and when it must be surrendered. That is what four hundred years' experience of statecraft can do. They are so graceful in yielding, so suave in getting their way. If only Dr Verwoerd could take a few lessons in statecraft from them. But he will not. And his slogan remains: If we give in one jot, we will have to give in all the way. He has much to learn, and it looks as if he is going to learn it the hard way.

There is only one way out for extreme Afrikanerdom which is now in the saddle. This tough seed must die and be reborn in the Holistic South African nation, to which every section, black and white, can make its full contribution. The pattern of nineteenth-century England will have to be followed, but with the quickened tempo of this era. The Progressive Party has the answer—the vote for every civilized person, black or white. But there must be substance to match the shadow of the ballot. The Reform Bills were not games with paper ballots that the workers and the ruling class were playing—or something out of a university syllabus in political science. They were much more than that—they represented a shift in class forces in real life. The second Reform Bill was followed by universal education, enabling the workers to play their full part in industrial progress. And that is the course we must also follow in South Africa. The Africans must eventually take their place as skilled craftsmen in industry, from which they have so far been debarred by artificial racial barriers. And an African middle class would also help to create social stability.

We should not underestimate the resistance of the hardcore Nationalists. The Afrikaners have been made hard by their tragic history, and this factor is not to be lightly dismissed. In this connexion it is worth recalling an interlude during the last session in Parliament, involving Margaret Ballinger, the Liberal, and the Nationalist M.P., J. C. Greyling:

Ballinger: I appeal to people who should have a sense of other people's rights and some consideration for other people's feelings and other people's hopes and other people's anxieties.

Greyling: We ourselves have also experienced that.

Ballinger: All it has done is to make you more bitter and revengeful.

The Afrikaners have come a long way, through thickets, jungle, fire and water. But so have others, with feelings, hopes and anxieties. Only this hard-core Afrikanerdom refuses to see it that way. A Nationalist in the Cape Provincial Council was asked: 'Is it fair to offer the Africans something, and then not to honour it?'

'Why not?' was his reply—straight, and not ironic.

If you are not sure whether the African has feelings, hopes and anxieties, listen to a crowd of Africans singing 'We Carry A Load'—or read the words of the African Alfred Hutchinson, himself one of the accused at the time, reflecting on the Treason Trial:

A slice of our lives has gone with the Treason Trial. I never knew the torture of sitting and the pain of incessantly falling words. . . . We have come a long way since the dawn arrests. . . . It was summer then; it is now spring. The seasons have pulsed through the barnlike Drill Hall [where the trial was being held] and brought their changes. The fans that whirred in the heat of summer stood forlorn, like slain windmills, in the cold of winter. The leaves of the plane trees outside turned a smutted gold, twirled into the gutter, leaving the trees bare and desolate. Now they are filled with the nodules of spring. . . . It has been a river of words with a bitter sediment. And sometimes life has seemed caught in eddies: things recalled, things relived—the Defiance Campaign, the riots of East London, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley; the protest marches, school boycotts, conferences.

A cataract of anguish leaps at you startling you anew. . . . Humour and pathos; comedy and tragedy—all have drifted down the river of words and the pools of tedium. . . . Our counsel has in our defence explored the treasure-chests of human thought and activity down the centuries; touched the beacon of human ideals that have remained true in the sea of flux and change: Shelley, Heinrich Heine, Lincoln at Gettysburg. They seemed to parade through the Drill Hall. The longing of hearts through the centuries was affirmed; the longing for liberty, equality, the brotherhood of man; and those things that grieve the heart were recounted—racial discrimination, oppression, the inhumanity of man to man. . . . The treason suspect is a darling of the people, fêted, often pampered. All you have to do is to suggest in a roundabout way that you are one—and open sesame. And this very love brings home the littleness of your contribution and brands into you the heroism of the people who give to you what is rightly theirs. How they have lightened the weight of the trials; how they have rallied to us—making regret a stranger, injecting us with their indestructible strength, and the heritage of their future. . . . Meanwhile we sit. The river of words flows on, meandering to some end that is far from sight.

And here is the final address of Robert Sobukwe, national president of the Pan-African Congress, after being sentenced to three years for incitement during the Sharpeville disturbances. Sobukwe held a lectureship at the Witwatersrand University, which he relinquished to lead the Pan-African Congress:

I feel no moral obligation to obey laws made by a white minority. I do not wish to impugn the personal honour and integrity of the Court, but an unjust law could not be justly applied. We have said we believe in the human race and that alone. The history of the human race is a struggle for the removal of mental, moral and spiritual oppression, and we would have failed had we not made that contribution to the struggle. We are glad we made it. As individuals we do not count, but history would always find new tools. We are not afraid of the consequences of our action and it is not our intention to plead for mercy. Thank you, your Worship.

I now propose to deal with the political thoughts of two leading representatives of Afrikaner moderation. I shall do so in the form of question and answer so that what they have to say is spoken by themselves.

Mr H. A. Fagan

B.S.: Mr Fagan, will you tell me in brief your political affiliations in the past?

Fagan: I have always been a follower of Hertzog. In the Fusion government I was the Minister of Native Affairs. After Fusion broke up in 1939, I joined the Nationalist Party under the leadership of Dr Malan, and was a Member of Parliament till 1943, when I was appointed a judge. And then I was appointed Chief Justice of the Union, a position I held until my retirement.

B.S.: It has been said that the Afrikaner has not altogether discharged his responsibility which is inseparably linked with power. Have you any views in the matter?

Fagan: I should say that it is a charge which is to some extent true. The Afrikaners are less than one-eighth of the total number of inhabitants of the country. In the political sphere we have unchallengeable control. The fate of South Africa thus rests with us. That places a very heavy responsibility on us. We are not the only ones affected by our decisions and our actions. They touch the lives of nearly thirteen million people who belong to other national groups—more than seven times our own number. They have repercussions beyond our borders, and we find floodlights from other parts of the world being focused on us. Mistakes which in the past hurt none but ourselves, and from which we could recover, may now do damage that is both more extensive and more difficult to repair. On the other hand we have wider fields for our activities, greater chances of achievement, more opportunities for promoting both our own welfare and that of our fellow-inhabitants of South Africa, our fellow-passengers in the ship for which we are setting the course. In all these circumstances I feel that we should on a number of occasions have been less precipitate and more circumspect than we have been.

B.S.: It is not only a question of numbers, but also the multi-racial character of the country that should be taken into account.

It is inflammable material and requires careful handling. Is that not so?

Fagan: In a country with an ethnically homogeneous population 'nationalism' and 'patriotism' may for all practical purposes be regarded as expressing the same concept, indicating the same sentiment of united effort and of a common loyalty. The position is different in a country inhabited by several racial or national groups. There patriotism is a uniting factor; nationalism—at any rate in the political as contrasted with the cultural sphere—is a dividing one. Various national cultures can exist and flourish side by side without clashing. Their contact may even mean reciprocal enrichment. Cultural nationalism is something that should always be encouraged and may never be suppressed. A political organization, however, aims at seizing control of the country's administration and excluding others from it. The doctrine of political nationalism in a multi-national country, however useful it may be to obtain redress of grievances, would seem to be the negation of a common patriotism and to call for perpetual strife among the groups, each of which has to try to pull down the one that is in the saddle and to take its place. There is thus a link between Nationalism and *apartheid*. Both concepts emphasize the distinctness of ethnical groups. But there are unifying factors, and statesmanship is necessary to compose differences.

B.S.: Is it due to some extent to the tardiness with which the Afrikaner people adapt themselves to changing circumstances?

Fagan: That is one of their failings.

B.S.: Can you give specific cases from the past to illustrate their inflexibility?

Fagan: There were times when we injured ourselves by vainly resisting changes when the correct policy was to accept them and adapt ourselves to them. I wish to mention two examples. In the first two decades following the establishment of Union, we sought a solution of the poor white problem, in the cry: Back to the land! The chords of national sentiment were played

upon: no matter how hard we have to struggle on the farms, we should not leave them, for they are the traditional home of the Afrikaner; in the cities we degenerate and become denationalized. This was not only the popular call of the politicians; for years it was also a favourite theme with our writers. It was a mistake, the effects of which we are now striving to remedy by the opposite course of exhorting the Afrikaners to try to capture a greater share of the cities' activities in trade and industry.

There is one more instance I wish to give: our desperate attempt in 1931-32 to maintain the gold standard after Great Britain had departed from it. The slogan was: Economic independence! Let us bring sacrifices and suffer hardships rather than be a camp follower in the British sterling bloc! Until we had to concede that we were faced with economic realities to which we had to adapt ourselves, and that the adaptation required a practical, not a sentimental approach.

B.S.: What can these references to our history teach us?

Fagan: In the first place, that when considering new problems arising in our path we should be conscious of our fallibility, and should not regard the apparently intuitive acceptance of a particular course of conduct by the overwhelming majority of the Afrikaner people as establishing its correctness. Secondly, that we are only too prone to disregard the distinction between sentimental and practical issues. And, lastly, that new conditions have to be met by adaptation, which can be successful only if they are carefully studied and objectively evaluated. New conditions are always arising. Life is never static. Like Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, nations as well as individuals must ever keep running to remain where they are, or else the world will move past them and they will be left behind.

B.S.: In 1946 you were appointed chairman of the 'Native Laws Commission' to deal with the Bantu influx into European industry, a matter akin to *apartheid*. It follows that you are acquainted with this subject, about which the major portion of

South African politics revolves. I therefore take it that you can offer expert opinion on its problems.

Fagan: I have given a lot of my time to the subject.

B.S.: When did it first become a pressing problem?

Fagan: In the years immediately following the end of the second world war, the whites seemed suddenly to wake up to the fact that their towns were being overrun by Bantu. The cry went up: 'Send them back!' It was a phrase that could be applicable to only a portion of the Bantu in the white areas, for numbers of them, probably running well over the million mark, had been among the whites for more than one generation. The general picture in the minds of the Europeans, however, was that of every Bantu having a home in the Reserves just waiting to welcome him back. The idea, moreover, of 'sending them back' was regarded as being the basic principle of General Hertzog's popular Segregation policy.

B.S.: Was it?

Fagan: General Hertzog wanted to develop and extend the Reserves and restrict the acquisition of land outside them by Natives, but he did not, as regards Natives settled in white areas and still less as regards Coloureds and Asiatics, put an ideal of 'total separation in every sphere' in the forefront, with compulsion as the first and the last method of trying to attain it. He recognized our conventional way of life and wanted it to play the main part in the regulation of racial contacts; the State had to intervene only where the voluntary adjustment failed, and should then try to do so in a manner that would avoid causing ill-feeling or a sense of grievance, and would involve no greater discrimination than the necessities of the case required; and he stressed that the most effective line of action is the positive one—starting with the provision of adequate housing accommodation, not with ejection and evacuation orders. 'Te veel dwang, te weinig zielkunde' (Too much compulsion, too little psychology). That was the comment of the eminent Dutch theologian Dr Bavinck,

on our Act for enforcing *apartheid* in university education. It is a comment that may well be applied to practically the whole of our *apartheid* policy as it is being put into effect today. Compulsory intervention by the State authority in the population's course of conduct with regard to colour differences should be the exception and not the rule.

B.S.: What was Dr Malan's attitude to *apartheid*?

Fagan: Dr Malan himself did not believe in the feasibility of total territorial separation. He did not check his supporters, however, in their vigorous exploitation on public platforms of the general sentiment in favour of it. When he came into power, he temporized by adopting the old expedient of governments faced with a problem which they themselves do not know how to tackle. He appointed a commission—the Tomlinson Commission.

B.S.: So Dr Verwoerd is going beyond anything contemplated by General Hertzog or Dr Malan.

Fagan: That is so.

B.S.: It has been said that the Tomlinson Commission did excellent work, but that its terms of reference were inadequate.

Fagan: I agree. It was charged with the task of 'conducting an exhaustive inquiry into and reporting on a comprehensive scheme for the rehabilitation of the Native areas, with a view to developing within them a social structure in keeping with the culture of the Native and based on effective socio-economic planning.' So far as it went, this was an excellent mandate; but there was an omission due to the prevalence of a misconception that all that needed be done to get the Bantu out of the European areas was to provide living room for all of them in the Reserves. The Commission was not even asked to consider the other aspect of the problem: where the gigantic industries established in the European areas—the life-blood of South Africa's economy, supporting non-white as well as white—were to seek a replacement for the Bantu labour force.

B.S.: What were the main results of your Commission?

Fagan: The Commission found that it would be impossible to remove the Bantu from the European areas; the Reserves could not carry them, and the industries which were established in the European areas, but which now were an indispensable source of income for all, white and non-white, could not do without them. It therefore merely recommended measures for controlling and guiding the movement of the Bantu in the European areas and for regulating racial contacts, as well as conditions would allow, for the benefit of both Bantu and non-Bantu. In the ferment which already existed in the country with regard to Bantu infiltration, the public were in no mood to give objective consideration to the reasons advanced by the Commission for its finding. A general election was in the offing, and violent attacks were made on the Smuts government for its alleged laxity and indifference in not checking the influx. In the election, which was held in the May of that year (1948), General Smuts was defeated and Dr Malan's Nationalist government took over.

B.S.: In an article entitled 'The Meaning of *Apartheid*', which Dr Eiselen, Dr Verwoerd's right hand man, contributed to the journal *Race Relations* in 1948, he wrote: 'I wish to say once more that separation regarded as an overnight measure would indeed be intolerable to all concerned, but that introduced as a twenty-year plan it would not entail any real hardship but would prove itself a policy of sound investment for white and black alike.' What is your comment today?

Fagan: More than half of the twenty-year period has elapsed, with a government in power that is pledged to carry out the policy of separation and is straining every nerve to do so. Yet no sign can be detected of even a beginning of the only process which can bring about 'the separation of white and Native into separate self-sufficient socio-economic units', that is, the mass withdrawal of Bantu labour from the European industries.

B.S.: Shortly after Sharpeville, Dr Eiselen is reported to have said sighfully: 'Something seems to have gone wrong.'

Fagan: I am not at all surprised.

B.S.: What were, in the main, the findings of the Tomlinson Commission?

Fagan: On October 1, 1954, the Tomlinson Commission presented to the government a Report which gave the *coup de grâce* to the idea of territorial separation. The Report showed that the Commission had made a thorough and exhaustive investigation into all potentialities, industrial as well as agricultural, of the Reserves. It recommended ambitious and expensive measures of development, as a result of which it hoped that the percentage of population absorbed by the Bantu areas would increase as time goes on, and that 'by 1981, that is to say, after twenty-five years beginning with 1956, it would have increased to 60 per cent of the total Bantu population and, if the tempo is continued, it will amount to 70 per cent at the close of the century. Should no development take place in the Bantu areas, the population of these areas at the close of the century will be approximately the same as the present figure'—the 1951 census gave that figure as 3,303,610—'and the Bantu population in the European areas will reach a figure of about 17,000,000. In other words, the increase in population of the Bantu areas will simply spill over into the European areas.'

B.S.: What is it that draws the African to the towns?

Fagan: The simple fact remains that, despite impressive statistics of great efforts and praiseworthy results in the Reserves, industry, the magnet for labour, keeps expanding much more rapidly in the European areas. As long as that occurs—and all indications are that it will continue for an indefinite time—the European areas will attract more workers, even if in order to retain the quota they require they will have to lure them by increased wages and improved living conditions.

B.S.: How do you view the plans for erecting factories along the borders of the Reserves?

Fagan: The government is doing its best to induce industrialists

who employ a high proportion of Bantu labour to shift their factories to the borders of the Reserves, so that the Bantu workers can keep their homes on the Reserve side of the boundary line and return to them after working hours or at week-ends. In so far as that can be done without damage either to the general economy of the country or to the vested interests of other industrial areas, the idea seems to me to be a highly commendable one. It is, however, no substitute for the scheme of territorial separation originally propounded, the basic object of which was a separation of interest and the elimination of contacts between European and Bantu. In these border industries the 'economic integration', the community of interest and the contacts are present in no less a degree than in similar industries in other parts of the country, where the European staff live in the town and the Bantu employees in the location.

B.S.: So you regard *apartheid* as a very distant dream?

Fagan: I do not see how any one who seriously examines the development of the *apartheid* policy since 1948 can escape the conclusion that its original aim has been receding further into the distance and becoming hazier the more keenly it has been pursued. It is true that as late as January 20, 1956 Dr Verwoerd still said in the House of Assembly: 'We had stated that *apartheid* was a direction and that the final logical outcome of that developmental direction would be total territorial *apartheid*', and that, in the context in which he made the statement, he was clearly reaffirming the proposition enunciated in it. The fact, however, that twelve years of the most strenuous efforts in that 'direction' have not brought us an inch nearer to the 'final logical outcome' makes the statement sound very much like Jimmy Durante's exhortation to his comrades, drifting with him in a boat on the open sea after the wreck of their ship, when they said they could see only the horizon, and Jimmy called to them: 'Then pull for the horizon; it's better than nuthin'.'

B.S.: The Marx Brothers would have had a word for it. But

to get back to serious matters—government supporters are adamant on this point, that if they give in one little bit to the Africans, they will eventually lose everything. Do you see it that way?

Fagan: This defeatist attitude is encouraged by the doctrine we often hear enunciated that there are 'only two roads', one leading to total separation and the other to total integration. The 'either-or' mentality, which sees only two extremes, like total abstinence and drunkenness, and will consider no choice except that of the one or the other, takes its stand on an over-simplification of life's problems; this calls for little mental effort but is hopelessly unreal. Human affairs are very, very complicated and seldom present us with so easy a choice. That there are ties, territorial, political and economic, which bind European and non-European together and prevent either from ridding himself of the other's presence, is a fact, and one which cannot be conjured away by stressing the dangers it may entail or by the ingenious word-splitting arguments we are often treated to as to whether the word 'integration' is an apt one for describing it or not. Nor am I interested in the question whether I regard it with favour or disfavour. Karroo farmers do not waste their time arguing whether the low rainfall of the area they farm in is something they should like or dislike. They accept it as a fact, and adapt themselves to it by planning their type and methods of farming in a way that will get the best results from it—or in spite of it. Similarly we have to accept the interdependence of the races in South Africa and shape our policy accordingly. I believe that such a 'policy of adaptation'—this may perhaps be a suitable name for it—can be found if we strive earnestly and sincerely to seek it.

B.S.: As a very distinguished lawyer, would you agree with the accusation made against the Government that its legislation on matters relating to colour is too rigid, relies too much on criminal sanctions and regimentation?

Fagan: With regret, I have to acknowledge that it is so. The ordinary function of a government is to maintain order and good administration. In the conditions of our country that would include such activities as providing facilities for the population to maintain the traditional conventions of its way of life and regulating inter-racial contacts in so far as that may be necessary in order to obviate friction, protect all people against the infringement of basic human rights and ensure for each group its due share of opportunities for progress and development. Measures of compulsion for fitting the way of life of the population into a particular mould fall outside the scope of this function. A government has, of course, the power to introduce them, but it is under no duty to do so; and the sphere is one in which it can seldom move without doing more harm than good by its interference.

B.S.: Could you now say something about the total pattern of colour legislation in South Africa—more particularly the attempts being made to put the clock back by such steps as doing away with the representatives of the Africans from Parliament, and the removal of the Coloureds from the Common Roll, and kindred matters?

Fagan: 'It is dangerous and hazardous in a time of emotional tension, where the clash of colours is acute, to tamper with the rights of groups of people, except where it means a patent increase of those rights and is accepted as such by the group concerned.' This is one of the theses formulated by Dr Ben Marais in his book *Colour: Unsolved Problem of the West*. I agree with it, and I see in it sufficient reason for being opposed to the removal of the representatives of the Bantu from Parliament. Moreover, that representation served a very useful purpose. It was a channel—as far as I can see, the only channel with official status that still remained in our constitution—through which independent Bantu opinion, free from government control or influence, could reach the ears of the European public whose vote decides their destiny. It gave them mouthpieces in the persons of

Members of Parliament, elected by themselves, whose tenure of office was not, like that of the chiefs and councillors who function under the Bantu Authorities Act, dependent on the favour of the government. And it helped to let the Bantu feel that they have a link with the central authority of the State to which they belong—something which I consider very salutary, because, as long as we are a single State (and that we certainly still are, though a prospect of dismemberment, which to my mind will be found to be either unrealizable or detrimental, is now being held out to us) loyalty to that authority is surely a sentiment meriting the fullest encouragement. I feel very unhappy about the ruinous isolation to which Asiatics are now condemned under the Group Areas Act. To me it seems inequitable, unjust and unethical. Neither am I happy about the legislation surrounding job reservation. Exemption permits may give some relief, but their arbitrariness is a factor that must create a feeling of insecurity and frustration. How can one devote years of one's life with real enthusiasm to learning a trade or being trained for a profession when, at any time, a determination by an official under a job reservation measure or under the Group Areas Act may make it impossible for one to exercise that trade or profession?

B.S.: I have discussed an area of legislation where the government is most vulnerable. I admit it—the reason is that it is this racial legislation which is going to determine our destiny. But, in all fairness, I feel that something should be said about the positive side of government policy. I believe the government has done quite a deal for the Coloureds.

Fagan: On the positive side constructive efforts have been, and are still being made, to promote the welfare of the Coloured people in so far as that can be done within the framework of the *apartheid* policy. A Department of Coloured Affairs was created; it is doing very good work in the way of rehabilitating and training the Coloured people, trying to find avenues of employment for them, and generally bettering their living conditions.

In the promotion of housing schemes the Coloured people are receiving their full share of assistance and of available funds, and active steps are being taken to provide them with separate amenities to recompense them for being excluded from those reserved for Europeans. A Union Council for Coloured Affairs, consisting partly of elected and partly of nominated Coloured members, has been established to deal in an advisory capacity with matters peculiarly affecting the Coloured people.

B.S.: And how do things stand with the Bantu in this regard?

Fagan: With regard to the Bantu people, too, no effort is being spared, not only to improve conditions in the Reserves, but also to provide those who are in the European areas with good housing and, generally, to treat them as well as is possible without slackening the enforcement of measures which have been put on the statute-book, or have been made part of the administrative routine, in furtherance of the dominant policy. This explains the otherwise puzzling paradox that on the one hand the government can quote most impressive statistics of the improvement in living conditions and of the general advancement of the Bantu both in the European areas and in the Reserves, while its critics produce pathetic instances of frustrations, even of inroads on such basic human rights as the living together of husband and wife and the preservation of family life, inflicted on them.

When police and other officials are invested with great powers, there will be instances where they abuse them; but apart from such cases, which are not the rule but the exception, there is no deliberate oppression of the Bantu. On the contrary, I have no hesitation in stating it as my firm conviction that the government, and also the European population in general, as the ruling group, feel their responsibility for the welfare and happiness of the Bantu people who are subject to their laws and their administration. That does not justify measures which have the opposite effect. What it does mean, however, is that such measures are not to be ascribed to ill-will, but that, where we find them, we

should recognize the fact that they are due to inherent weaknesses in the policy which produces them; and we should seek the remedy in a change of policy.

Here, then, we have the views of one of the most illustrious sons of the Afrikaner people. I do not agree with much that he has to say, but I respect his candour, integrity and sincerity. Most important of all, Mr Fagan has not allowed nationalist sentiment to shut out reason and humanity. It is significant that neither General Hertzog nor Dr Malan favoured a policy of *apartheid*. Two exhaustive inquiries, the one under Mr Fagan and the other under Professor Tomlinson, found *apartheid* to be impracticable. Yet it was the main factor in unseating General Smuts, and, today it has served to alienate us from the rest of the world.

It is conceivable that Mr Fagan, as a Cape moderate, will yet play a leading role in breaching the fort of Verwoerdism, and he may then be joined by the United Party and Sir de Villiers Graaff. Such a government would act benevolently towards the Africans. But it is doubtful if benevolence would meet the exigencies of the situation. A bridge must be found to moderate African opinion and its leading representative Albert Luthuli. The Progressive Party under the leadership of Dr Steytler can alone give effect to this.

Dr Jan Steytler

B.S.: I understand that your father was something of a legendary hero in the Boer War. Can you say something about his exploits?

Steytler: My father fought on the side of the Boers, was captured by the British and sent to Ceylon as a prisoner of war. He escaped from the British ship taking him there, and swam to a Russian man-of-war. He returned to South Africa, where his escapade was naturally a big morale-booster. He was captured a second time by the British, and this time they held on to him.

B.S.: Are you fully an Afrikaner?

Steytler: Yes, absolutely.

B.S.: In view of the sufferings of your people and your family at the hands of the British, how is it that you have no anti-British feeling?

Steytler: In 1926, when as a result of the Westminster Statute South Africa gained her independence to all intents and purposes, my father called the family together and said that from that day his fight with Britain was at an end.

B.S.: How do you explain the fact that the Afrikaner people are so tradition-ridden—so resistant to change?

Steytler: They are isolated geographically and culturally, and they are afraid of being submerged.

B.S.: Do you feel that the Afrikaners are by themselves capable of guiding the destinies of the country?

Steytler: I believe that every section should play its full part. We all have our contribution to make, especially in these difficult times.

B.S.: What do you make of Dr Verwoerd's general ideological outlook.

Steytler: He was wedded to Nazi doctrine during its heyday, and he still is. He is a fanatic who will not change. He believes he has religious and moral sanction for what he is doing.

B.S.: Do you think that he will steadily move towards fascism?

Steytler: It is inevitable, as under the pressure of circumstances his road becomes more difficult.

B.S.: How is it that the Afrikaners, who are an essentially religious people, are what many believe to be unchristian in their attitude to the Africans?

Steytler: They believe that they are morally right. It is our business as a party to convince them that they are morally wrong.

B.S.: Do you regard *apartheid* as morally wrong?

Steytler: It is not morally wrong in itself. It is wrong because it is impracticable—and they know that it is.

B.S.: What are your reasons for saying it?

Steytler: By virtue of the geographic distribution of the Bantu areas and the ethnic units, it is impossible ever to consolidate those areas so that they can form a homeland for the Bantu peoples. The Tomlinson Commission makes mention of the fact that there are 110 Bantu areas. In addition to that, there are 154 black spots distributed over the length and breadth of the country, reminding me of the measles spots on the back of a child. It is quite apparent that it is not the intention of the Nationalist government to implement that policy. The Tomlinson Commission recommended that there is only one basis on which this can be made reality in South Africa, and that is if more land is bought for the Bantu people. The government has said unequivocally that no more land in addition to the 1936 settlement will be acquired. In addition to that, a prerequisite to any idea of implementing Bantustans is the acquisition of the protectorates. As yet they do not form part of South Africa.

My second reason for believing that it is impossible to realize this policy is because of the economic sacrifices that will be demanded from the South African nation. The Commission recommended that £104 million be spent over ten years. So far, after twelve years, £10 million has been voted for building industries along the borders of the reserves. Seven out of eight of the farm-workers are non-white, and six out of seven of the mineworkers on the Rand are non-white. Are you going to remove the farms and the mines to the Bantustans or the borders of the reserves?

B.S.: According to Dr Verwoerd, the Bantustans are going to be independent African states, where the African will be able to enjoy full sovereign rights and independence.

Steytler: Nothing of the kind. The aim is to make South African colonies of the Bantustans—and that at a time when

colonialism is totally bankrupt. The Nationalist Party, with its overwhelming majority during the past twelve years, has tried in all earnestness to ensure the white man's independence of non-white labour, and it has not succeeded in doing so.

B.S.: It is suggested by the government and by Ministers that, in order to alleviate the consequences flowing from the fact that the entire South African economy rests on non-white labour, industrial development should be transferred to other areas. We are told that industrial development in the future is to take place not in the industrial centres in South Africa but on the borders of the reserves.

Steyler: Once again I concede readily that some of the social problems arising from the concentration of this great mass of non-whites would not present the same difficulty in the border areas. But the transfer of industry to those areas would not destroy the power of the non-whites in the economy of South Africa. The Minister of Finance, Dr Dönges, once told us that he differed from us as far as the definition of 'integration' is concerned. When I explained to Parliament that we, the Progressives, were convinced that the whole of South Africa was dependent on non-white labour, and that by virtue of that fact it was within the power of the non-whites to obtain political and other rights, the Minister of Finance told us that they did not recognize the fact of the economic integration of the non-whites; that they regarded the presence of the non-white worker in the industries of our country and on the farms in the same light that they viewed the integration of a mule or a donkey into the farming activities of the farmer. If we could solve our problems as easily as that, by means of hair-splitting over definitions and words and by conflicting interpretations of terms, then we would have no problems. But the fact remains that the Native on whose labour we are dependent can exert a stranglehold on the whole of South Africa and in that way can obtain every right which he claims today. When we go further and see what the experts recommend

for the future development of South Africa—when we go into the findings of the Viljoen Commission—we see that the prospect is held out that the more South Africa develops, the more Native labour will be absorbed. The more Native labour we absorb, the greater becomes the power of the non-white to obtain political and other rights when the time comes.

B.S.: What other rights have you in view?

Steyler: We believe that steps should be taken to give the individual the opportunity, which is a right that is his, a right that cannot be alienated, that he should be put into the position to develop his potentialities to the maximum. Therefore we believe that all people in South Africa should be given the opportunity to acquire skills so that they can improve their standard of living, so that they can educate their children, so that they can help to create the buying power of the South African nation. The time is long past where South Africa could afford the luxury of having the potentialities of 13 million of her people lying dormant. The Progressive Party believes that if we want to develop in the way that we can, we must mobilize all our abilities, irrespective of the race or colour of the man. In that regard we believe that the restrictions put on our industry and on labour must be removed. We believe that a man has a right to sell his labour in the best market.

B.S.: And what of the opposition to this from white workers?

Steyler: The future of the country is more important than any section of it. With the increased buying power of the Africans, there will be an expansion in industry which will be to the benefit of all workers—black or white.

B.S.: On the issue of *apartheid*, your views appear to tally with those of the other opposition parties. Could you now let me have the main tenets of your programme, and where you differ from the other parties?

Steyler: We are convinced that there is only one way in which we can get this multi-racial population to live together in peace

and harmony, and that is by granting political and economic rights to people not on the basis of their race, not on the basis of the colour of their skin, but on merit. Every party or every person who accepts that the permanent population in South Africa will consist of whites, Natives, Coloureds and Indians, will inevitably be forced to grant human rights on the basis of merit, and not on the basis of skin pigmentation. I want to issue this warning in all humility to the white population: that unless we practise the Christian principles of our nation we shall lose our influence, not only in South Africa, but throughout Africa, as sure as day follows night. I cannot imagine that in this year 1960 the white man can justify the withholding of all rights from civilized persons. I fail to understand how anyone can believe that there is any future for us on the basis of withholding all rights from those persons by force and force alone. I say therefore that the party to which I belong totally rejects this discrimination which is based on colour alone; that we shall tell the electorate of South Africa what dangers are inherent in that situation; that we shall explain to them how little security they have with all the *apartheid* laws placed on the statute-book by the Nationalist Party government. We dare not think for a moment that when we pass a law in Parliament restricting the rights of people that law will be observed if it is devoid of all elements of justice. Sooner or later circumstances will arise which will cause the measures placed on the statute-book in that way to appear farcical in South Africa. We are attempting to influence the white population in South Africa to accept the ideal that a civilized man, whatever the colour of his skin may be, should be recognized as a civilized person. There are numerous people in South Africa who fear for the future because the whites form such a small minority. They are trying in various ways to safeguard the white man's position. But I do not think that there is any member here who will differ from me when I say there is no more insecure basis for the white man's survival than failure to be just towards his fellow-men.

B.S.: Mr Steytler, if I may interrupt you, you said you are going to grant political and economic rights to people not on the basis of race or colour, but on merit. How are you going to determine merit?

Steytler: We have obtained the voluntary services of prominent experts in South Africa. I want to explain that the gentlemen who have agreed to serve on this commission of experts are not all members of the Progressive Party. We have no guarantee that they will reach unanimity. They are all prominent men, who have voluntarily agreed to do this and who are serving in an honorary capacity to advise us within the terms of reference laid down by our congress, to which they will report. The congress will consider their report and then come to a final decision about the details of our policy.

The members of the commission will be: ex-Chief Justice A. Centlivres; ex-Justice Leslie Blackwell; Prof. L. M. Thompson, professor of history at the University of Cape Town; Prof. Etienne Marais, history professor at the University of the Witwatersrand; Dr Edgar Brookes, former Natives' representative in the Senate and at present member of the staff of the University of Natal; Mr Kenneth Heard of the University of Natal; Mr H. F. Oppenheimer; the Hon. J. G. N. Strauss, q.c.; Mr Arthur Suzman, q.c.; Mr Selby Ncobo, a former lecturer in economics at the University of Fort Hare; Dr N. E. van der Ross, principal of the Battswood Training College; Mr Lazarus, principal of the Sastri College; Mr Donald Molteno, q.c., who is acting as convener of the commission; and Dr Z. J. de Beer, the Member for Maitland. They are going to render a service not only to the Progressive Party but to South Africa. They will formulate plans to enable us to find a basis on which Boers and Britishers and non-whites in South Africa can live together on the basis of a joint fatherland.

B.S.: Will those qualifications apply to both whites and non-whites?

Steytler: They will apply to all persons, whatever their colour.

B.S.: Would you disfranchise the whites already on the voters' roll if they fail to qualify?

Steytler: White voters already on the roll will remain. Future voters will have to comply with the same qualifications as the other voters. The problem before South Africa is not how we can keep down the non-whites; the problem is how we can continue to exist in South Africa as a multi-racial country. Must we for ever quarrel in South Africa? Must the white man maintain his position with Saracens, or does he want to maintain it on a moral basis? There can be only one reply to that question. We dare not think for a single moment that we can always keep three-quarters of the population down without ever allowing them effectively to exercise any political rights. The farce of Bantu homelands, a system under which political rights granted to a person living in Queenstown can only be exercised in Zululand, will not work. What satisfaction will it give these people? And what satisfaction will it give our own conscience or the western world, which we cannot afford to provoke any further?

B.S.: It is said that the white electorate will find your policy ahead of your time.

Steytler: That statement can only be true in two respects: first, if it can be proved that there are no civilized non-whites in South Africa, secondly if the voters of South Africa, the white population, the people who have the political power in their hands today, refuse to give political rights at this stage to civilized persons. There is not a single person who would contend that there are no civilized non-whites in South Africa, that there are no non-whites who have sufficient sense of responsibility to exercise their vote in a responsible way. Over the past fifty years, and particularly the last twelve years, the electorate has been misled by slogans which have been represented as policies, in spite of the dangers which they create for the whole of South Africa. Let those people who differ from us give

us the reply. If it cannot be brought about through territorial separation, then it is only on a basis of power and force that the white man can survive in South Africa, unless you are prepared to take the non-white population in this country with you and to make them feel that they are South Africans; unless you instil in them that patriotism of which every South African is proud. Let those people who tell us we can maintain our position on that basis first prove it to us. I want to say frankly that our party is convinced that the voters of South Africa will no longer be prepared to allow themselves to be misled by political parties in South Africa. We shall state the facts as they are, and we shall bear the consequences. I have no doubt in my mind that before very long the electorate of South Africa will see the facts as they are.

B.S.: Will many people not argue that if you carry out your policy of giving the vote to the civilized Africans, it will not be long before the white men are swamped by the Africans and so lose their say altogether?

Steyler: No political party in South Africa can give that guarantee to the whites. All that we can definitely guarantee to the electorate of South Africa is that in the distant future, if numerical strength is to be the decisive factor at the polls and the non-whites are in the majority, those non-whites who will then comprise the government of the country will be civilized persons. That possibility exists, and I am convinced that if we want to retain white leadership we can retain it longest on the basis of the policy of the Progressive Party. The guarantee that we can give is that civilized and responsible persons will exercise the vote. There are people who want to know how long the white man will retain his identity in this country. Once again this is an erroneous outlook in South Africa; it assumes that the Immorality Act and the other *apartheid* measures will ensure that the white man retains his identity. If the white man in South Africa has reached the stage where he needs laws to retain his identity, then he is no longer worthy of the name. Those things are determined, and

the foundations are laid, in your home and in your school, in your circle of friends and in your church. It depends on what value the white man attaches to his identity as a white man; it does not depend on the Immorality Act or any other law. That is why we say that on the basis of the Nationalist Party's approach, with this sham territorial separation, with this sham *apartheid*, it is only giving the people a false sense of security. The choice before South Africa is this (because we shall always be a multi-racial country): do we want to live in peace or as enemies? We have accepted unambiguously the common voters' roll as the basis on which the non-whites in South Africa are to be given political expression. The yardstick will be the qualifications and the capabilities of the individual and not his colour.

B.S.: The bulk of the Afrikaners, it is said, are so opposed to political concessions to the Africans that they will never give their support to the Progressive Party.

Steytler: That may have been the position in the past, but it is no longer so. Today the Afrikaners realize that they must lift themselves out of the rut of conservatism and move forward with the times. The alternative is suicide. And many Afrikaners, even the extremists, are beginning to see this.

B.S.: What proof have you?

Steytler: We have a mathematical proof for this assertion. Nationalist Afrikaners are joining our party in significant numbers. They are beginning to realize that unless there is a change of policy it is inevitable that the whites will have to leave the country or die fighting behind the Saracens.

B.S.: I would now like to pass on to external affairs as they affect us in South Africa. Dr Verwoerd has always argued that the west was playing into the hands of the communists and Soviet Russia by not giving him their support against advancing African nationalism. Do you see it that way?

Steytler: Certainly not. The opposite is in fact the case. If the Tsar had made concessions in good time there would not have

been any Soviet Russia. The west is ready to give us all the necessary support against Soviet Russia, if we can so adjust our policies that we don't needlessly antagonize the coloured races, whose friendship is being sedulously sought by Russia. I can do no better than to refer you to the lectures Dr C. W. de Kiewiet, principal of Rochester University, delivered here during a recent visit. Here is a significant extract:

We are still trying to interpret the new Russia which Mr Khrushchev leads. The evidence is growing that Russia is less interested in exploiting economic collapse and political chaos. Because of her own industrial power Russia too has begun to look upon undeveloped areas as markets for her economic production. Propaganda through trade rather than blatant ideological subversion is likely to be the new Russian approach. But Russia has an appeal to all undeveloped societies that does not at all depend on propaganda. Western analysis has concerned itself with the brutal and dictatorial qualities of communism. Intellectuals have laboured to expose its philosophic errors and contradictions. What was overlooked was the hard fact that the Soviet Union has developed a powerful method of giving coherence, drive and discipline to an economically backward or unco-ordinated society. It has devised instruments of coercion and control that give governmental stability, social discipline and resolute economic direction. Africa needs these. Mr Khrushchev's boast that Russia possesses a superior instrument of modernization cannot be lightly dismissed. Russia appears as a most significant alternative method of government and economic action, one possibly better adapted to backward nations than those of the west. . . .

Africa, in any event, has more of the world's sympathy than any other continent. It is the one continent about which most western nations have a bad conscience. The aspirations of Africa have powerful allies in popular emotion. Both American and British public opinion are determined not to appear in a bad light in Africa. In both countries the intellectual leadership even insists that Africa must move decisively forward. About Africa there is a sense of urgency, and the conviction that this is Africa's day. Neither the United States nor Great Britain can take any position that reduces the political role of Africa. There will be no opposition to the rise of African political aspirations. To this fact the white populations of Kenya, the Congo, the Rhodesias and South Africa must reconcile themselves.

Dr de Kiewiet believes that America is both morally and

technically equipped to meet the challenge. But it must help to eliminate such trammels as Verwoerdism, which will become steadily more embarrassing as the battle is joined. And the people of South Africa must play their part. There is no question of a social revolution. All that is needed at this stage is a change of direction, to give the awakening black masses a measure of hope.

B.S.: One last question. Are you doing anything to establish contacts and understanding with moderate African opinion, such as is represented by Albert Luthuli?

Steytler: Without a doubt. We believe that if we have to live together with the non-whites in South Africa, there is only one basis on which we can do it, and that is that we must consult with them. Co-operation does not only mean working together in factories. Coexistence does not only mean having enough to eat. It means more than that. It means that people who are ruled by laws must have a say in those laws. That is why we maintain that the consultation which the Nationalist Party had in the past with these people is inadequate, and that they must be given the opportunity to voice their feelings.

B.S.: Is it for that reason that you were against the banning of the Pan-African Congress and the African National Congress?

Steytler: Decidedly.

B.S.: Who among the African leaders represents moderate opinion, so that communication could profitably be established with him?

Steytler: Without a doubt, ex-Chief Albert Luthuli.

These are the views of another Afrikaner who looks to the future—away from those searing episodes in our history which have induced bitterness and unreason. He has fought the English, and has suffered, but he realizes that this belongs to a past that has little relevance to the present situation. His ancestors fought the African indigenous tribes, but he sees no reason why this should be used to try to enslave them for ever. He has entirely freed

himself from colour prejudice, and he sees no difference whatever between white man and black, if they have both attained the same level of civilization. His policy of assimilating by a steady process every black man who reaches a certain level of civilization is the only feasible course to pursue, if we agree that politics is the art of the possible. No good purpose will be served by making an abstract declaration about the equality of man. This does not exist in Europe or America either, and, while we must move as fast as we can in the direction of granting political rights and economic opportunity to the Africans, attempts to try to effect this overnight can only result in a colour clash that will leave South Africa in ruins.

It may be argued that this promise of equal voting rights for all civilized human beings is another one of these distant promises—like the Bantustans. There is a world of difference, for the Progressive Party policy could immediately be tested, once that party got into power. Every African or Coloured who passes the test will be immediately placed on the voters' roll. That would be an earnest of good faith. And in the course of time the necessary steps could be taken to implement the policy of the Progressive Party in full. It is a clear-cut policy that leaves no room for equivocation or deception.

Admittedly, the test of its ultimate efficacy is whether the Progressive Party can build a bridge to moderate African opinion, as represented by Albert Luthuli. Such a compact would prepare the way for the emergence of a skilled African proletariat and a middle class, who would bring the necessary stability to our national affairs and ensure democratic rule as it is known in western Europe. There is no need to despair. The main difficulty in the way is that the government's present policy sets up an extremist reaction in the African leadership. As things are at the moment, no moderate African leader could retain his following. But that mood need not persist for ever. Chief Luthuli is not a rebel by nature—he is a genuine Christian who, like Tolstoy,

gave up his authority as a Chief, and the good things that went with it, in order to serve his people. Giving evidence in the Treason Trial, just before the Sharpeville shootings, he declared:

My people crave for an opportunity to work for a great united South Africa in which they can develop their personalities and capabilities to the fullest with the rest of the country as a whole. No country can prosper when antagonism divides its people and when, as we Africans see it, government policy is directly opposed to the legitimate wishes and interests of a great majority of the population. The African National Congress has always sought to achieve its objectives by using non-violent methods. In its most militant activities it has never used nor attempted to use physical force. It has used non-violent means and ways recognized as legitimate in the civilized world, especially in the case of a people, such as we are, who find themselves denied all effective constitutional means of voicing themselves in the sovereign forum of the country.

But the government, instead of treating with him and the African National Congress which he heads, has banished Luthuli to his home in Natal—he has since been arrested and held incommunicado—and his organization has been banned. And Nationalist Members of Parliament chose every opportunity to jeer at him. ‘Luthuli is still carrying on with his illegal work from his place of banishment,’ said one of them on the floor of the House. ‘What do you expect him to do—look at the stars?’ replied a Progressive Member of Parliament. ‘Of course, he is doing underground work.’ ‘I always thought he was a mole,’ came the rejoinder.

Since Sharpeville, Luthuli has been losing ground to the extremist Pan-African Congress. Incidents like Sharpeville, and the inflamed nationalism burgeoning on the continent of Africa, do not conduce to moderation. But a more stable mood may come with time. The first essential is to bring to an end the rule of the present government, whose approach to the African is that nothing must be conceded. This appears to be their immutable policy. At the moment the Progressive Party may be a long way from power; but we are living in a state of tremendous flux and change.

Out of the Commonwealth

IN OCTOBER 1960 the government held the republican referendum and scraped home by about 75,000 votes. Despite the outward jubilation in the Nationalist ranks there was no one more disappointed with the result than Dr Verwoerd. For it showed the yawning gulf between what he aspired to and what he attained. If the Coloureds had not been removed from the voters' roll, and so deprived of the right to vote in the referendum, there would have been no republic.

What were Dr Verwoerd's aspirations? He wanted to let a truculent world know that he had the whole nation behind him in the prosecution of his racial policies. The results proved that half the whites stand resolutely opposed to him; and this makes nonsense of his claim to be the defender of white civilization. Most important of all, he lamentably failed to break through to the English section and to the Jews, after falling over backwards to do so. Dr Verwoerd knows this, and the world knows it. No less significant is the way the Afrikaners in their tens of thousands told Dr Verwoerd in effect: 'We are not concerned with what kind of republic you are going to give us, inside or outside the Commonwealth, and we don't care a fig for your "Black Peril" propaganda. We will have nothing to do with you, or with the policies you are pursuing.' The Nationalist organ *Die Burger* was clearly disturbed at this phenomenon. The opposition fought Dr Verwoerd on principles. The Progressives staunchly held to their policy of giving civilized non-Europeans the vote, and the United Party pledged themselves to give the vote to the Coloureds (an advance for this party). This candour

did not frighten anyone away—not even the United Party Afrikaners. The ‘black peril’ bogy is steadily being laid. There is a big advance on the era of General Smuts, with its evasions and subterfuge.

How did Verwoerd set out to achieve his ends? The baton from the conductor signalled *moderato*. This strategy was pursued in an effort to win the nation and present a solid façade to the world. The republican issue was so watered down that the English section would not be disturbed. The Prophet lacked fire—as if he saw doom ahead of him. The fruit farmers from the Cape stirred uneasily, so he guaranteed them a republic and imperial preferences within the Commonwealth. The little tethered goat in Alphonse Daudet’s story gave up the comforts of shelter, chose freedom and went into the mountains where the wolf lurked, to enjoy it. She fought the wolf until dawn broke, and then surrendered to death. But what kind of freedom fighter is Dr Verwoerd? At that moment when he is busy hacking away the last imperial chain shackling him, he is vociferously haggling with his enslaver to remain his customer. What Ruritanian comedy!

In an epistolary debauch just before the referendum was held—he sent out hundreds of thousands of personal letters to the voters—Dr Verwoerd told us that the east and west blocs were both ready to abandon the white man in Africa. So what is the conclusion? Presumably that we set up a south bloc, with the karroo as the base and an Eagle’s Nest in the Hex River Mountains. South Africa may as well resign herself to the fact that external events will determine her destiny, that her future will be decided not on the home playing fields of Stellenbosch and Pretoria, but on the away grounds—near the Nile, the Thames, the Hudson and the Volga. As the menace approaches, Dr Verwoerd is looking for internal allies. The referendum verdict was a Verwoerdian republic; history’s verdict is going to be quite different. After the referendum Dr Verwoerd launched a campaign

directed to winning the English to a policy of keeping the Africans—the common danger—in their place. There is no sign that he is making any progress whatsoever. The feeling of the English is well conveyed in an editorial which appeared in a leading daily paper here:

As we see it, the critical demarcation between English-speaking supporters of the opposition and Afrikaner Nationalists is not that the two groups speak different languages and pursue different cultural interests. The essential distinction is that they have different sets of human values, different codes of democratic conduct. If it were shown that the English-speaking section accepted the *baasskap* philosophy of the Afrikaner Nationalists and approved the methods of its implementation, then it would not matter in the slightest if it were completely absorbed into Nationalist Afrikanerdom and vanished as a separate group. Nobody would be any the worse off, for nothing of value would have been lost. No, the English-speaking section will fulfil its destiny only if it gives expression, in its words and actions, to those concepts which validate what is known as 'the British way of life'. There is no need to define this here. What we require to note is the extent to which the English-speaking section has already compromised its position in this regard. A case in point is the furore in Natal where, we suspect, the English-speaking people are more concerned about their own particular place in a Nationalist republic than they are about the British democratic values as they affect all men. In other words, the future of the English-speaking people in the coming republic and the effectiveness of their role depend entirely on their determination to remain true to their own liberal tradition with its emphasis on the great principles of justice, tolerance and fair play in our multi-racial society. They must not sink back into apathy nor must they abandon their beliefs and become English-speaking white supremacists, slowly drowning in the currents of contemporary thought. They have a better future than this—provided that they rededicate themselves to their principles and champion them with pride, not arrogance; and with vigour, not bitterness. In this way they can work for a better day in this our stricken land.

This is an idealization, and savours of smugness. For all that, there is a good deal of substance in this homily addressed to the English. The trouble with the English is their political apathy. It derives from the fact that they are a minority group who had to

use Afrikaners such as Botha and Smuts to win the truculent Afrikaners to the conception of a greater South Africa. Not only did Smuts dominate the scene so that no political figure of importance could emerge during his lifetime, but he did his work so well and thoroughly that the English were quite prepared to leave things to him. The creative energy of the English went into finance, mining and engineering. The younger generation of South African English is beginning to bestir itself in a way the older generation never did.

The republic was to have been the apotheosis of Dr Verwoerd's political career, but it looks as if it is going to be a shabby apotheosis. It is already apparent that, as a result of his recklessness, South Africa will have to steer through shoals and shallows, awesome and forbidding. At the Commonwealth meeting of Prime Ministers Dr Verwoerd had not a friend; Macmillan and Menzies alone gave him a measure of support. This did not signify any kind of ideological affinity, but their readiness to help him enter the comity of nations if he should change his ways.

There are differences of opinion as to whether Dr Verwoerd wanted South Africa to leave the Commonwealth or not. There is little doubt that he was greatly discomfited by his having to leave. The vigorous stand taken by the Afro-Asian group proved disconcerting to him, for he was convinced that Macmillan would be able to control them—at least, for this year. It is not that he has any deep-seated love for the British Empire. During Hitler's ascent in 1942 he was ready to see its passing without shedding a tear. Under his inspiration the Nationalists formulated a plan for a republic which would have taken South Africa out of the 'decadent' Empire and made second-rate citizens out of all but the Afrikaners. Unfortunately for them, Hitler's Reich did not stand like granite for a thousand years.

Most disturbing to Dr Verwoerd must have been the role played behind the scenes by President Kennedy. Significant here is the

way Nkrumah arrived at the conference after his talks with Kennedy and immediately sailed into Verwoerd—with Kennedy's connivance, it seems fairly certain. And the Afro-Asian group took up this vigorous cue. It was about this time that Adlai Stevenson's anti-colonial utterances at the United Nations became more frequent and more sharply defined. Where his predecessor Cabot Lodge used to say: 'We're not a colonial power, we never have been', Mr Stevenson says: 'We are an anti-colonial power, and we are the oldest anti-colonial power.' This hostile mood has been carried over into the subsequent debates on South-West Africa and *apartheid*. America is Dr Verwoerd's white hope. His broad strategy on the international front is to await a conflict between America and Russia. The intemperate conduct of the Afro-Asian groups, as evidenced at their conferences, is balm to the many wounds gaping on the body politic of the South African government. Dr Verwoerd calculates that if the Afro-Asians move closer to Russia, America will be forced to link up with South Africa to safeguard her position on the African continent. It is not a pointless calculation. Events in the Congo and Cuba are regarded as excellent auguries.

There were a number of overriding reasons why Dr Verwoerd did not want to leave the Commonwealth. The farmers, mainly Nationalist in their political affiliations, are perturbed at the prospect of one day losing the advantages of imperial preference for their products. But much more important is the internal situation here. The salient feature of Nationalist policy at the moment is to win the English to the anti-African front. If Dr Verwoerd had remained inside the Commonwealth they might have been ready to talk to him, for the English are as disturbed as the Afrikaners by the rising tide of colonial revolt; they differ mainly on what methods to use to contain it. But the departure from the Commonwealth was a final wrench, following a succession of irritations and insults and convincing the English once and for all that they could have no truck whatever with Dr

Verwoerd. English sentiment about this is fairly accurately conveyed in a statement made by a leading English United Party Member of Parliament, Mr J. Hamilton Russell:

The English section will not get into a laager with Nationalist extremists to fight the battle of the Blood River. We can work with the Afrikaner, and have done so since Union. We can find a common patriotism with any Afrikaner who does not worship *apartheid*; who keeps his mind open and his heart charitable; who realizes that all people of all races are entitled to a place in the sun, and deserve to grow in responsibility with the years. We English-speaking people are prepared to meet even those who differ from us half-way. But first of all you must drop this present pilot. As long as you keep Verwoerd, we can never grow together. There will never be white unity on the basis of *baasskap apartheid*. None of us will go into a laager to re-fight the battle of the Blood River in order to preserve an impossible dogma based on a *Herrenvolk* mentality labelled by our Commonwealth friends as 'abhorrent', 'revolting', 'repulsive'; to sustain dogma detested by the whole of the Christian Western civilized world. South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth is the inevitable culmination of thirteen years of relentless, ruthless, remorseless pursuit of *baasskap apartheid* by the government, intensified by Dr Verwoerd.

As their difficulties grow, the extreme Afrikaners are becoming bewitched by their own imaginings. Reality is too harsh to look straight in the face. Under the inspiration of Verwoerd the latter-day Nibelung, they would like to re-enact their tribal myths. Already the Valhalla mood is becoming perceptible. Said one of the Cabinet Ministers: 'We will fight, come what may. And if we go down, it will be our fate and not our fault.' This typical Transvaal die-hard sentiment is not generally acceptable even among the Nationalists, many of whom are becoming exasperated by Verwoerd's rigidity. While *Die Burger*, organ of the Cape Nationalists, has often been critical of Government policy, two influential Nationalist papers recently joined in the attack. The widely read *Dagbreek* wrote:

There must be a joint approach in the face of what might become a catastrophe. South Africa can follow one of two courses. One is to continue

with the present bickering about colour and thus paralyse ourselves for effective action while we challenge the outside world to take its next step. Along this road there can be only one result, with finality just around the corner. A small and divided nation cannot stand up against the world.

That same week *Die Transvaler*, representative of die-hard opinion and Dr Verwoerd's most outspoken supporter, wrote: 'The situation which has existed since the days of Van Riebeeck cannot continue.' And *Die Burger* wrote:

The anti-South African forces have again burst through and are advancing faster. A breach was made in London. The importance of what the anti-South African forces achieved there cannot be measured by the effect on our commercial and other relations with Britain and other Commonwealth countries. The significance is to a large extent psychological. It has given the anti-South African forces a drive and appetite which thus far they did not have.

But the state of disorientation in Nationalist ranks comes most devastatingly from a letter printed in *Die Burger* and written by an Afrikaner Nationalist post-graduate student at Cambridge University, where he has been for the last three years. He writes:

Today I stand before the shocking fact that I have not been able to convince completely a single Englishman, even in private conversation between friends, of the rightness of our standpoint. I know all the old arguments: the British are prejudiced; they have no right to talk because they do not know our position; they are badly informed; they are hypocritical; and they are afraid of annoying the black people and so on and so on. I know all these arguments. But the fact remains that if a person goes on year after year reasoning long and earnestly with friends, thoughtful Christian people, and the outcome is always the same, then certain convictions have to come to you. How familiar is the situation! I sketch the problem for such a friend, draw the lines of a mighty black continent with a small group of whites in one corner who ask for a small piece for themselves where they can live their own lives and be ruled by their own people. If I then grasp him by the arm and with every grain of power and conviction that is in me, call out, 'In heaven's name, can you not see that if we do not apply *apartheid* there is no future for us?', then he is all of a sudden still. He has not seen the situation in that light before. He is suddenly compelled to consider the matter on its merits. In the majority of cases honesty prevails. 'Good,' such a man will

say, 'if you honestly intend to divide the country fairly between the races so that each group can rule itself independently, then I will accept *apartheid*.' But his wide-awake, trained brain detects immediately the ghastly gap between the pretty ideal of *apartheid* and its present application. 'If the danger is so great,' he wants to know, 'then why do you not move faster?' To him it appears that our present policy is simply one of white *Herrenvolk* who despise the coloured races and wish to keep them permanently in a subordinate position. And now my arguments are no longer so convincing. I can still give him an insight into the economic problems and make him understand the necessity for the pass laws. But if *apartheid* is necessary to prevent the Bantus from overwhelming us, what of the Coloureds and the Indians?

All of a sudden my arguments are hollow and empty, because I am now reasoning not against him but against myself. I know just as well as he does that the Indians of South Africa have separated as finally from India as my forefathers from Holland and France. I know just as well as he does that it is not good enough to say that because we have to apply *apartheid* to the Bantu, it is logical and right that the Coloureds and Indians should also be separated from the whites compulsorily. I know just as well as he does that *apartheid* can never be justified until all groups have their own land where they can live out their lives and rule themselves. When I walk away, I know that though he still believes that we are not monsters altogether, we cannot be completely exonerated. And in my own mind the conviction is stronger than ever, that if we do not give the Coloureds and the Indians a piece of land somewhere, we shall be damned before God and Man if we do not grant them human rights while they continue to live among us. And I think in terms of representation by their own people in the Parliament of the land, which is our Parliament, but certainly theirs also. I could go on to tell of my conversation with Indian students; of the tremendous difference that a juster treatment of the Indians would make on the relationship between ourselves and the Asiatic lands.

I can tell of the things about which North African students speak, of plans that are being forged to bring our country to its knees. If our oil supply can be cut off, then nothing can prevent our industries grinding to a standstill within a few weeks. And because we ourselves supply the hammer, our friends are powerless to prevent the death-blow being administered. These are frightening thoughts, but I would despise myself if I knew that I did what is just out of fear. I want every Afrikaner to decide between himself and his God if we are treating the Coloureds and the Indians justly, and whether the first step towards that end must not be to let them and their own people sit in Parliament.

Here we have the pass to which Dr Verwoerd has brought the country. It may be asked: why did he choose to stage the referendum when he was so vulnerable? Why did Hitler march into Czechoslovakia and unite all his opponents? The Prophet has no need of logic. His actions are dictated by intuition and compulsion. It is the dynamic of the whole movement—one victory must be followed by another, or the spirit will begin to falter and fade. But Dr Verwoerd is only an *ersatz* Nibelung. Hitler possessed not only strength, but also craft and cunning. He moved into Czechoslovakia when the correlation of forces was in his favour, and he even succeeded in dividing Russia from the west. But Dr Verwoerd has no real strength—his talk of granite is a joke. And there is no Loki around him to teach him a bit of craft and cunning. It is a military truism that when things are moving against you, you dig in and wait for a favourable turn of events; you do not deliver a frontal attack, as Dr Verwoerd did when he embarked on his republican campaign. With their limited vision, the Nationalists calculated that with Saracens and other lethal weapons they could subdue the African for ever. Little did they reckon with sentiment across the borders. Sharpeville stunned them. Whatever else they failed to learn from the tragedy, they now know that they can have all the weapons in the world, but that they dare not use them lightly.

The gods must be scheming to destroy Dr Verwoerd. Two months before the Commonwealth conference he turned down the request which came from his own ranks that the Coloureds should have their own representatives in Parliament—a refusal that was much to the consternation of the Nationalists of the Cape, where there is quite a spirit of concord between white and Coloured, if not full integration. I recently spoke to a number of highly educated Afrikaners from Stellenbosch, which is characteristic Cape territory. While they supported Dr Verwoerd's Bantustans policy, they were genuinely outraged at the slap he had administered to the Coloureds. It was a small concession that

could not have made the slightest difference in our national evolution. But when it comes to the race question the man is just lacking in the least symptom of magnanimity. 'A short life and a merry one' would seem to be his guiding principle. And it was all accompanied by the grandiloquent declaration that he would stand firm as granite.

The Coloureds responded by linking up with the anti-white front. What else could they do? On his return from London Dr Verwoerd reproached Mr Macmillan for trimming his sails to the wind. But if the British ruling class had not tacked and veered, there would have been no Empire and no ruling class.

One of the Coloured people's intellectuals has written:

The Coloured people have always been great constitutionalists, and this we remain. We can and we do respect government as government. We do not always agree with the acts of a particular government, but we do respect the institution. It is just here that we have a special word to our government of the day. We wish to urge the present government not to look upon the Coloured people as agitators, as near-communists, as anti-white. We may with safety be regarded as peace-loving people who desire no more than to be left alone to give our skill and labour, and to receive a living in reasonable freedom and happiness. In this we would work with any who have the same or compatible ideals. To say that we have English connexions does not imply that we are anti-Afrikaner. On the contrary, we could speak at length with great sincerity on the many bonds of common interest with Afrikaners. So we are worried when we hear whispers that there is likely to be a 'tightening up' in matters affecting the races, worried because we do not want unnecessarily to be brought into conflict with our friends. If the government would choose this time of crisis to reassess the position in the country, and would act so as not to sharpen antagonisms, not to invite recriminations, not to encourage disloyalty, but rather to draw the real peoples of South Africa closer together, they would find ready allies in the Coloured people. If the government would interpret the issue in such a way as to build a real South African nation, consisting of white, brown, black, of English-Afrikaans-Bantu-speaking peoples, the Coloureds would give more than their share of co-operation. Race discrimination has had its day, and has failed, both inside and outside this country. Now we are ready to give race co-operation a

serious try, and in this we would welcome a positive lead from the government of the country.

But what Coloured is going to listen to this note of moderation, in the face of Dr Verwoerd's 'granite' declarations? Under pressure from his own party, he has after a lapse of some months come out with a 'solution' to the Coloured and Indian problems. There is going to be a Coloured State within a State, and an Indian State within a State—and Parliaments and all the other paraphernalia. Indianstans and Colouredstans are out. Nietzsche quotes a Chinese sage who decided that when mighty empires were doomed they began to have numberless laws. Dr Verwoerd is a doomed man. Even a pro-government paper has suggested that he should take a rest from his arduous duties. He has been faltering badly of late in Parliament. On the surface he still appears to retain his following. But inwardly they are aware of the doom that awaits them. Parliamentarians are discarding their last shred of dignity, and religious leaders their last vestige of Christian charity, as they rally round him. There is something feverish and frantic in all this—the last rally of a dying lamp. I told one of the richest wine farmers in the Cape that his house was one of the nicest I have ever been into. 'What is the good?' he said, 'One of these days Chief Albert Luthuli is going to live in it.' The moderate Cape Nationalists are biding their time. They have as much as said to Dr Verwoerd: 'Go ahead with your policy—take it as far as you can, but if you fail, we take over.'

Amid all this welter, the only hopeful sign is the vigour with which Sir de Villiers Graaff, Leader of the Opposition, has seized the initiative from Dr Verwoerd. He did so by promulgating a plan which envisages an advance towards racial legislation, in an appeal to the people of South Africa over the heads of Dr Verwoerd and the government. Here are its salient points:

(1) The Cape Coloured people should be accepted as part of the western group and should have the right to sit in Parliament.

(2) It must be recognized that the Asian community is a permanent part of the South African population. They should be protected against inroads on their rights resulting from the Group Areas Act, and they should have their future political status determined by immediate negotiations with them.

(3) The urban Bantu, among whom there is an emergent middle class, should be given representation in Parliament on a separate voters' roll. They should be exempted from carrying passes, and assured of an undisturbed family life.

(4) The Bantu permanently settled in the Reserves should be given a measure of self-government on an elected basis. They should also have representation in Parliament, but not necessarily in the same manner as the Bantu who are permanently de-tribalized.

(5) The government's policy of job reservation for whites should be abandoned and replaced by the rate for the job.

This plan has its limitations, but it is receiving serious attention from important Nationalist sources. It is far from being a final solution, but it may conceivably effect the first important breach in the Verwoerdian citadel. With Verwoerd out of the way, the road would be open for a more vigorous advance towards a stable multi-racial society. Commenting on the plan, the Nationalist *Dagbreek* wrote:

The plan must be studied sympathetically. It shows that Afrikaans- and English-speaking people do not think as differently as it would seem. A federation does not imply integration and, although it is possible to establish one which would speed integration, it was conditional in the principle of a federation that the essential character of the federated states be preserved. While one side advocated separate development, and the other integration, the standpoints were in direct opposition. There was no way of talking with one another because there was no way of bridging the gap. A small white population cannot afford to remain divided on basic policy in the face of alarming problems.

Most significant about this statement is that no objection is

taken to treating the urban African as a permanent city dweller with entrenched rights. This is a big step forward for an organ of Nationalist opinion.

How did Dr Verwoerd respond to the Graaff plan? The federation plan would perpetuate the enslavement of the blacks, he argued, suddenly assuming the role of defender of African freedom. The government plan of Bantustans would give the African his full freedom. Here are politics worthy of a Vienna café under the decline of the Hapsburgs. But what value is this when only one-half of one per cent of your budget is going to these Bantustans, where the blacks are going to enjoy the bliss of paradise. A recent news item had it that the Bushmen have been given sanctuary in the Kalahari Desert, as a result of which they alone will be allowed to hunt there. We are faced with a problem of staggering dimensions involving millions of living, breathing, pulsating human beings. But Dr Verwoerd can only give us more and more grandiose shadows and abstractions. Or, as the fable says, he is busy cleaning the shadow of a carriage with the shadow of a broom.

The government has reached a dead end, and it knows it. Talk of coalitions is becoming more rife. A coalition may not be around the corner, but neither can it be very distant, as United Nations pressure is steadily stepped up. It is no secret that one-time Chief Justice H. A. Fagan, who has often been thought of as a possible leader of a move towards coalition, or at least as a catalyst, has called on opposition leaders in Parliament. Since he may emerge as a national figure, I give here an extract from his opening address at the University of Cape Town students' art festival on April 20, 1961:

With all our scientific progress, the time we live in is one of anxiety and uncertainty. There are new currents in the world, to which we are finding it difficult to adjust ourselves. One of them is the awakening of new aspirations in the backward nations. Nowhere is that phenomenon manifesting itself more strongly at present than in our own continent of Africa. For ages it has

been known as the Dark Continent, where primitive tribes lived their simple lives in their simple subsistence economy, apparently not envying the white man his luxuries nor questioning his prestige nor disputing his claim to lead and even to rule wherever he came among them. Now not only are lights beginning to shine where there was darkness, rousing the African giant from his sleep of many centuries, but the world is turning to look and is directing glaring searchlights on him and on the regions over which his shadow falls.

To us at this southern tip of the continent, which is also *our* home, that is an entirely new experience. We do not yet know how to react to it. Some speak of granite-like resistance, others of adaptation. Which way shall we choose? And if we make our choice, how inflexible must our resistance be or how far can our adaptation go?

We are not puzzled: we are worried. We may even feel ourselves to be losing faith in our ability to find and steer a safe course through the unaccustomed storms into which our boat seems to be running.

And then we think of the younger generation—those who expect to see and live through the year 2000, whereas we are only speculating anxiously about it.

Our hope must now lie even more in them than in ourselves. Will they, with minds that are fresh and untrammelled by rooted ideas, find the way in a situation which is so new that our own lifelong experience can be of but little help—and may even be a hindrance?

While ordinarily it is the young people who seek security it is now the old who are filled with doubt and who have to entrust the future to the vigour, the suppleness and pliability as well as the strength, of the young, to the pluck, the daring, the venturesomeness and the vision of youth.

The truth of the matter is—and Dr Verwoerd is not the only one who has tried to evade it—that neither the western world nor South Africa can any longer ignore the cry for political equality that is sweeping the world. The main drive comes from the coloured races who after five centuries are looking for a place in the sun. It is a primitive earthy drive that cannot be diverted by academic sophistication, for you are dealing with masses of people living under the sign of the police baton, people to whom philosophical niceties are largely meaningless. Neither will the cry be stilled by force.

The problem of the equality of the human being is not a new one. It has been with us through the ages, in one form or another. It is the quintessence of Christian doctrine. But equality before God in heaven is no longer acceptable to the masses of men whose ancestors lost their freedom in return for the Bible and whisky—the antennae of the Christian Western world. The rise of the proletariat with the Industrial Revolution first posed the problem of equality in its social and economic form. It became less pressing, if not resolved, through imperial development, when the Western nations fed more or less tranquilly on the fat derived from the developing empires, and their working classes fed with them. But that, too, came to an end with the first world war. Things became critical, more particularly for the imperial powers, with the end of the second world war, which saw the awakening of the coloured peoples.

This question of equality is more complex than it looks. There is more involved than material wealth—there is all the prowess, arrogance and hauteur that go with belonging to the upper classes. The loss of their savings through inflation angered the German middle classes. But the fear of becoming proletarianized, that is, sinking to the level of the worker, called forth an indignation which lifted Hitler to power. In South Africa the 'descent' from 'white' to 'black' is even more precipitate than from the middle-class level to the proletarian. It is a bitter pill that has to be taken a little at a time.

So great has been the upheaval of the backward peoples, that the problem is to canalize this discontent so that it does not issue into an inverted imperialism, with the coloured races seeking to dominate the white peoples by way of revenge. Come to sunny South Africa, and you will know the full implications of this stirring of the coloured races.

The one ray of hope is that within Afrikanerdom itself moderation is to some extent beginning to assert itself as the Afrikaners come face to face with reality. Every politician down

the ages has pandered to the mob, but the Nationalist politicians have been over-indulging these proclivities of theirs. The danger is all the greater here, for we are nearly all mob. These politicians are also beginning to realize that it would be suicidal for the white races to glare at each other truculently against the background of the black menace.

The Nationalist Party, while housing many fanatics, is also receiving support from many who are capable of changing their minds. They support the party largely for sentimental reasons, in the belief that it has done a lot to restore the self-respect of the Afrikaners after the demoralization of the Boer War defeat. But they evince no hatred towards the present generation of Englishmen. They also have important financial interests, and are more sensitive than the mob to the financial shocks that would ensue in quick succession if crisis should follow upon crisis. If these moderates assert themselves, we shall see a speedy end to Verwoerdism. This will give us the necessary moral base to rally the nation and win the West to our side. It cannot be done by the Verwoerdian cry: 'The Bolsheviks are coming!' The West is not going to lose two hundred million Africans in order to gain the friendship of Dr Verwoerd.

The correlation of forces is by no means in favour of the Nationalists, despite their control of Parliament. And while one should not underestimate what this determined band of men can do with the State apparatus in their hands, one should also bear in mind that essential economic power is in the hands of the elements who stand opposed to the Nationalists. A simple parliamentary majority, resting on a minority vote, cannot reverse the shattering effect of the Boer War, when the floodgates were opened wide to an influx of population which has for ever transformed the nation's social and economic structure. South Africa is demographically and economically very different from what it was in Paul Kruger's days.

More than anything else, the Nationalists fear the rise of the

coloured races, and the majority of the party are ready to make concessions to win the English section to their side and thus help consolidate the white front. This explains the timidity of their republican campaign. Those who were rending the heavens with the past misdeeds of British imperialism, were meekly asking to be taken back into the Commonwealth as the last chain of enslavement was being hacked away. The price of peaches and pears that the imperial connexion will guarantee was only one factor—the more important one was to rally the English to their side. And there is the additional fear that an unbridled pursuit of extremist aims may drive the English to link up with the moderate African elements led by Albert Luthuli. There is indeed a growing English section which believes that moderate Afrikanerdom, to which it has been deferring since Union, has betrayed it by going over to Dr Verwoerd.

The external situation is another factor unfavourable to the Nationalist extremists. They have no support outside the country, their colour policy having proved an embarrassment to the democratic world in the struggle with communism. Franco Spain and Salazar Portugal are no substitute for Hitler Germany. Conservative Britain is their only support in a hostile world. But there is little she can do while Dr Verwoerd remains intractable. Mr Macmillan has more than once informed the Nationalist government of the harm done by their colour policy, with the coloured races a major factor in world affairs. Their one hope is that, in its war of attrition with Russia, America will turn to McCarthyism.

Whatever the tragedy of the Afrikaner people—and it is searing enough—there is also the tragedy of the Africans, who want to know if they must be condemned to eternal servitude. It is a crucial question. That is what a section of the Afrikaners desire, and they think they can enforce it with the tanks and planes at their disposal. Admittedly they would win many battles—but they would lose the last one. If the Africans are denied some kind of place in the social arrangement they will burst their way in,

guns or no guns. 'You will die behind the Saracens,' were the words of Dr Jan Steytler.

A government architect, one of a group of 150 who were leaving South Africa to settle in Australia, was asked, as the ship was about to depart, to give his reasons for emigrating. He said: 'I cannot bear to be here when the Africans are not free, and I could not bear to be here when they are.'

Here is the epitome of the South African tragedy.

Thunder on the Left

SO FAR I have dealt with the white man's perspective of South Africa's political tasks and problems, and the result is a top view. I now propose to trace some of the efforts made over the last forty years to instil some kind of political consciousness in the African masses, who at the time were largely inarticulate.

In the twenties the most important work was done by the Communist Party and that extraordinary Swahili, Clements Kadali, who first started the African trade union movement here. As I was a member of the Communist Party from 1924 to 1928, I can write from first-hand knowledge.

Besides these efforts to turn up the virgin soil of African dormancy, there were other eruptions on the Left. These assumed volcanic proportions in 1922, when what started as a miners' strike culminated in the Rand Revolt, in the course of which General Smuts brought artillery, tanks and planes into operation to subdue the turbulence. In this revolt it was the white workers who began the fight, but before long it became an all-in affair, as things tend to do in this part of the world. Themes and motifs clashed contrapuntally, chaotically. The militant trade unionists hailing from Britain fought for socialist equality—the times were still dominated by the spirit of the Russian Revolution. The Afrikaner workers fought against the English capitalists, both because they were English and because they were capitalists. And for good measure they vented their wrath on the black man—the perennial enemy and peril—who did not know what it was all about, and who thought the white man had gone berserk. In 1922 I was living in the suburb of Fordsburg, where the heaviest battle was fought.

Much I saw at first hand, and the rest I was able to put together from lengthy talks with people who participated in the struggle.

The industrialization of the country by General Hertzog, in an effort to free South Africa from its dependence on Britain, brought the poor whites and the tribal blacks into the towns, where the secondary industries offered better opportunities. The trade union movement was split between those who stood for a rigid colour bar and the Left-wingers who wanted to build a bridge of communication between the black and white workers. This chapter ends with the story of Solly Sachs, the most formidable force on the trade union Left.

Edward Roux

Edward Roux was a born scientist who lectured to us on diet—proteins, calories, vitamins—when half of us did not have money to buy food. Despite the profusion of Communist Party meetings that he had to attend, apart from other onerous duties, he won a scholarship at the Witwatersrand University that took him to Cambridge, where he gained his doctorate. On his return he was appointed to an important post as a biochemist in the government low-temperature laboratory, where splendid prospects opened up before him. After three months he was dismissed because he had participated in a communist unemployed demonstration. He became a professional revolutionary, setting the type in the party printshop for a mere pittance.

To appreciate in full the act of valour I am about to describe, it must be borne in mind that the violence of the anti-African hatred in South Africa can be encountered only in the Southern States of America. In standing up for the rights of the African, you immediately find yourself in opposition to the spirit of the age, as it were. From the moment a white child is born he is nurtured on this hatred, the fuel of which is drawn from the South African

historic scene and the so-called savagery of the African as he opposed himself to the advance of white civilization. The century that has elapsed has if anything sharpened the bitterness of relations between black and white. I have heard intelligent people say that, even though the advance of the African could not be checked for ever and that he was entitled to it, they would rather be dead than behold that day.

The African does not possess the franchise, and he naturally cannot offer himself as a candidate in any election, whether local or national. There was a by-election pending, and the party decided to stage a demonstration against the undemocratic treatment of the African peoples by advancing the candidature of a black man at the nomination court. Edward Roux was chosen to carry the task through. The candidates and their friends, as well as the general public, packed the court on nomination day, as it was an important by-election—it eventually resulted in the downfall of the government, in fact. As the candidates were nominated, they had to stand up to present themselves to the electoral officer.

‘Any more nominations?’ the officer called out after the two candidates of the regular parties had been nominated.

‘I want to nominate the African John Marks as the candidate of the Communist Party,’ rang through the court-room. The atmosphere in the court was sizzling at this historic affront to white civilization. Threatening gestures were directed at Roux from every part of the room, and it became evident that he would not be able to leave the court without police protection. By that time the news had spread through the town, and there was quite a menacing-looking gathering outside the entrance of the court-room.

Roux demanded police protection until he was out of danger. Two policemen led him away to the back entrance, where he could make his exit without being observed. They pushed him out. But, as he fled, they beckoned to the crowd. Roux had a few

hundred yards' start by then, and as he was quite athletic he was able to hold his own. Fortunately for him there was a wattle plantation nearby, and this enabled him to elude even the most persistent of his pursuers. When he found himself on a station three miles away, he thought that he had finally gained safety. He was about to jump on to the train which had pulled into the station, when three of his pursuers who had forestalled him rushed at him and dragged him from the train. They kicked and struck him. But soon the train conductor and the passengers came to Roux's rescue, for he appeared to them to be the victim of a common assault. As the train pulled out of the station, his assailants were still standing there disconsolately. Roux had a fearful gash under the eye. The scar is there to this day.

The miners' strike

The 1922 miners' strike started when the Chamber of Mines, the supreme controlling body of the gold-mining industry on the Rand, decided to lower wages all round and retrench about three thousand white miners, mainly overseers receiving very high pay in relation to the black miners. The fixed ratio between the number of whites and blacks on the mines began to prove a financial burden in the disturbed economic conditions following the first world war.

The African miners, tribal and migratory in character, come from Native Reserves which had been set aside for the African tribes when the domination of the land by the Europeans had been completed. Through the poverty of the land in these Reserves, the Africans are forced to come to the mines for long stretches, and with their wages they help to sustain their families, who work the land in their absence.

In the same way as the Africans have been extruded from the best land of South Africa, they have also been kept out of the skilled trades by a rigid colour bar, since the white workers

consider the skilled side of the industry as their own preserve, against the trespass of which they have taken every measure of defence, political as well as economic. The white workers occupy an intermediate position in society. On the one hand, they have to fight capitalism, in the tradition of the Labour movement in Europe; on the other hand, they regard themselves as an *élite* that must watch against the encroachments of black labour.

The striking miners were mainly made up of Englishmen who had emigrated to South Africa at the turn of the century and Afrikaners who had drifted into the semi-skilled trade of mining from the countryside. This racial division revealed itself in the political emphasis that was given to the strike. While the English miners, with their traditions of British trade unionism, were mostly concerned to have a crack at the capitalist Chamber of Mines, in the case of the Afrikaners these occasions of turmoil brought out all their unconscious hatreds of the African and the Englishman, both of whom they had fought for a century in an effort to gain a foothold in the interior of South Africa. In their eyes the Chamber of Mines stood for English capital.

At that very moment when they were hoisting banners on which were inscribed flamboyant slogans of freedom from want and oppression, the strikers' commandos, organized on the model of the Boer forces during the Boer War, adopted a lynch law attitude towards the politically inarticulate blacks. These conflicting tendencies placed progressives in a quandary in regard to the essential idealism of the strike. It had much of genuine grandeur about it at moments, and also much that was terribly shoddy and degrading.

The 1913 and 1914 general strikes had been followed by a rebellion during the first world war—just one. And since strikes and rebellions alternate in this country of ours, we were treated to the real thing in the revolt of 1922, which might be called a compounding of a strike and a rebellion. Strikes were regarded as a kind of city rebellion, and the lads of the village always joined

in with alacrity. The provocative tone of the newspapers as usual reflected the bitter relations between the classes. The *Star* wrote:

The price of gold has fallen heavily, and it is inevitable that there should be a retrenchment of expensive white labour. Neither is it possible to maintain the high level of wages. It is true that several thousand miners will suffer. But there is the whole economy of the country to consider. The alternative is to close down fifteen low-grade mines. This can only mean ruin to the country. The government and the country are concerned, and if the miners do not understand the position now, they will not understand it until experience, the hardest teacher of all, had taught them to do so, and then it will be too late. We believe that the trade union leaders are in a militant mood. We would advise them to read Luke xiv, 31. To save our readers the trouble of looking it up, we give the verse: 'Or what King going to make war against another King, sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?' . . . We have no intention of acquiring the reputation of a Dago State.

General Smuts, who was Prime Minister at the time, drove over to Johannesburg from Pretoria to meet the miners' leaders in a final effort to avert the strike.

'Gentlemen, we are again in trouble,' he said, his left hand twitching nervously. He went on:

These strikes on the Rand tend to get out of hand, as you know. Tempers become easily frayed, and there's no knowing what it can lead to. Do not let us bungle into disaster. Be sure, gentlemen, that we've explored every avenue before you take drastic action which you may later regret. I'm convinced we can solve the difficulty. Convinced may be rather too strong a term to use. I'm sanguine. I'm ready to help in every way. I say the issues are too big. The issues are too big, make no mistake about it. If trouble should start, it will be my duty to draw a ring around the contestants. I want to see that law and order are maintained throughout the country. The nation must not be allowed to suffer. If anyone should try to start trouble, I want to let you know in advance that I shall use all the force at my disposal to bring matters under control. I am standing here for the whole country, not for any interests. I am the government—and I shall know where my duty lies.

The miners' representatives told him that they would reconsider the position if the Chamber of Mines would withdraw their ultimatums. They refused, and the strike began when these ultimatums expired.

Leaflets addressed to the African miners were printed in all tribal languages and pasted on the walls of the compounds along the Rand. They declared:

Greetings! You are aware that there is a strike on the gold mines, and that work has ceased for the present. A great many of you cannot therefore be employed on your ordinary work. Other work may be found for some, and others may have to remain idle for some time. The government is sending this message to you that you need not be alarmed or disturbed about these conditions. The matter in dispute between the white workers and their employers will be settled without any anxiety on your part. Remain in your compounds and obey the orders given to you through your compound managers. By doing so you will receive the necessary protection. On the other hand, any disturbance or disorder will be promptly dealt with. Greetings.

A Sunday quiet seemed to have descended on the Rand. The Ferreira mine, situated in a landscape that swept uninterruptedly to the southern horizon, looked peaceful and pleasant in the brilliant sunshine. It was almost idyllic. Groups of men here and there stood or sat under the shadows of the gum-trees. A tennis game visible in the mid-distance, and the smoke from one single mine chimney lazily rolling across the further sky, formed the chief features of the restful picture. But within two days the idyllic gave way to the martial, as helmeted policemen with rifles and bandoliers slung about their shoulders, and revolvers in holsters at their hips, began to dot the landscape. About half of them, mounted on sturdy horses, constantly paraded the mine-grounds. The strikers and police showed goodwill towards each other.

As the strike continued, a wave of Messianism suddenly swept the Rand. It was a heady atmosphere of hope and conflict. Everyone suddenly felt his energy multiplied a hundredfold—all in the

service of something greater than himself. It swept vaguely across the State, across laws, across the insolence of the English conqueror, the prosperity of the rich, and the menace of the kaffir. In every centre, the focus of life was the workers' rostrum, from which there poured forth nightly a spate of wrath, compounded of hatreds, spites, disappointments, empty dreams, ambitions—the noble and the infamous. The mob had, as if by a whirlwind, been lifted from the swamps to the heights, and they were ready to challenge Life and Fate. The social frame was under terrific pressure. There was no singleness of theme in this volcanic upsurge. Keys and motifs collided jarringly.

'The government is supporting the British capitalists who took our land from us,' declaimed strike commando leader 'General' Piet Erasmus in a voice rasping with passion. 'There must be a dividing line in the statute book, so that we can know where black labour ends and white labour begins.'

'Fight till you drop,' were the concluding words of a wild harangue by Irishman Harry Haynes. 'The Sinn Feiners of Dublin, the Sammies of Calcutta and the Bolsheviks of Petrograd have shown us a good example how to do it.'

'Comrade chairman,' were the opening words of the Cornishman Ernie Shaw. And then he began to cough and bring up blood from his phthisis-ridden lungs, till they carried him away—the most compelling oration, so far.

Speeches were followed by musical entertainment. Most fascinating was the performance of a Portuguese miner on his guitar. He would extract from his instrument mournful melodies that spoke nostalgically of home—and also, perhaps, of an awareness that the strike was going to be lost. In this grotesque assemblage, there stands out in my mind the figure of anarchist Sarah Lewis. Sarah followed the Portuguese guitarist. I see her now on the elevated pedestal silhouetted against the night, five feet in height and in Slavonic garb. Her face had all the lineaments of a peasant woman, and was wrinkled with age. Her voice,

tremulous and quavering, was hopelessly lost in the immensity of the night. Enough, you would think, to set in motion a wave of derisive laughter that would sweep her away. But such was the mood of aspiration which had seized everyone, that the thousands bared their heads and stood in reverent silence while Sarah sang her song of freedom.

Outstanding as men and orators were Fisher and Spendiff, who had left the tin mines of Cornwall to seek their fortunes in the goldfields of South Africa. The last words I heard Fisher and Spendiff pronounce from the rostrum was on the day martial law was declared. They said they were going to take their places behind the barricades, and that whatever the outcome of the struggle they would not be taken alive. Fisher and Spendiff were as good as their words. The next time I saw them was ten days later in their coffins—after the government had subdued the revolt with the aid of artillery, aeroplanes and other weapons of war. Fisher had left behind a note in a bottle, saying that he had died by his own bullet, not theirs. And in another note he bequeathed £3,000 to his wife and Spendiff's jointly.

Strange are the places where the spirit of chivalry can be found!

The strikers' commandos found no time to harry the blacks as they rattled their money-boxes in an effort to get funds for their soup-kitchens, which partly helped to stave off the spectre of hunger menacing children and grim-faced men and women determined not to yield. The ranks of the strikers began to give way dangerously as the movement back to work gathered momentum, despite the harangues of the leaders. The headlines of the *Star* read: '951—today's official return', 'Back-to-work landslide expected', 'Call it off', 'Firm stand by Chamber of Mines', 'The last phase'. The struggle became desperate. A huge crowd collected outside the home of a blackleg miner. As the strikers threw the furniture into the street and set it alight, a woman rushed out of the house screaming: 'It's easy for you to talk. You don't have half a dozen children hanging on to you crying for bread. If you

had to face them every time you went home, you'd talk differently. Where can we go with our home in ruins?'

I went down to the mine-compound to see how the black miners passed their time and what they felt about the strike. In the silence of the night the Chopi, hailing from Portuguese East Africa and the most musical of the black tribes, were singing tribal tunes to the accompaniment of primitive xylophone-like instruments. Elsewhere black miners were packing their belongings into tin cases, getting ready to embark for home. They were going back to the reserves as there was no work for them. The Chopi musicians stopped as I approached.

'What do you think of the strike?' I asked one of them through the police boy.

The Chopi laughed, and after a while said: 'The white men are behaving strangely. They're holidaying for weeks and weeks, and fighting amongst themselves. The devil has gone into them.' He added that he would like to play a Chopi song for me.

'Why are your songs so sad?' I wanted to know.

'We must dance our sorrow,' he replied.

Black hands wandered with expert deftness as they picked out the melody with the rubber-headed beaters on their instruments. One tune, more light-hearted than the others, greatly amused the players. It was translated for me by one of them.

*Oh, oh, listen to the orders,
Listen to the orders of the Portuguese.
They want a pound for tax.
This is wonderful, father.
Where shall I find the pound?*

As I walked to the gate of the compound, the police boy said: 'Every black man feels that there is no more law, no more police, no more protection. He must now protect himself from the strikers, and he carries a stick to defend his life. We feel we've lost the arm of the government.'

Suddenly I heard the sharp crackle of rifle-fire coming from the far side. As soon as an African showed himself, he was brought down by the multiple fire of the strikers' commando who had launched an attack on the compound. Bodies were poised for a moment in mid-air in uncertainty, folded up, and sank to the ground. A hundred yards away, in an open space, a thousand men, women and children were seated on piles of timber. From this improvised gallery they watched with curious detachment the unfolding of the bloody drama. Their eyes were fixed unwinkingly on the tiny wisps of earth that were tossed up by the bullets, or the momentary disclosure of a black arm or head as someone ran to take shelter. Several times a figure appeared in fatal relief, walked slowly a few steps, stood still under the savage bursts of fire that greeted the target—and fell.

'These bloody strikers should be taught a lesson—carrying around guns and terrorizing the land,' a shabby man with a Cockney accent mumbled. 'They're the scum of the earth. A bunch of traitors that should be shot on sight.' He spat and wiped his mouth with his ragged sleeve.

'It's the buck niggers who are the cause of the trouble,' the man next to him said. 'A little lead will do them no harm. They should never have been sent to France. They've come back from the war thinking they're as good as the white man. The strikers resent the attitude of the kaffirs.'

'What attitude?' someone asked.

'The insolent attitude.'

'I can only see that the blacks have been standing by humbly for weeks. The Native Reserves have been emptied of police since the strike began, and not a white person has been touched.'

'I wouldn't talk like that, or you may finish up with a slap on the jaw.'

The cry, 'The mounted police are coming!' silenced the crackle of rifle-fire. The sharp clatter of horses' hooves grew

more distinct. With wild shouting, a chaos of human beings began to spread over the fields covered with darkness. The light of the road lamps now revealed a column of riders, rising and falling in their saddles, the horses, with proud necks arched, moving forward in disciplined rhythm to the jingle of spurs. When the excitement had died down, some of the crowd began to trickle back to find themselves in the presence of a mass of bodies scattered over the quadrangle of the compound. Next to the kaffir xylophone lay the Chopi player, still clasping the beater in his right hand.

'Last night, forty natives were killed and twenty-five wounded as a result of the murderous attacks of the commandos,' declared General Smuts in Parliament. 'The government has information that these unprovoked attacks are designed to give the impression throughout the country that a Native rising is imminent. The Government has promised, and intends to give, protection to the entire population, including the Natives and Coloureds.'

The trade unions also issued a public declaration denouncing the unprovoked attacks on the black population by sections of the strikers. Events had taken such a grave turn that the trade unions approached the Chamber of Mines with a view to a settlement. The Chamber of Mines replied with a letter which best expresses the temper of those times. It read:

We do not propose to waste further time in endeavouring to convince persons of your mental calibre. The Chamber has made an attempt to restart the mines on its own account. That attempt is succeeding to a very considerable and rapidly increasing extent. The trade unions, in an obvious desire to obstruct the attempt, propose to substitute for it an opportunity for their orators to expend a few million words. The Chamber are occupied with the winning of gold and coal and they see no reason why they should discuss their business with the representatives of slaughtermen and tramwaymen.

The slaughtermen and tramwaymen, among others, resented the tone of this letter. The trade unions declared a general strike. The day after, on the night of March 9, 1922, through the streets

of Johannesburg, rumbling lines of military vehicles flanked by cavalry gave departing winks of light. The horses' hooves sounded a dark reveille with the break of day. Johannesburg was awakening to martial law. The town was plastered with Government proclamations:

All citizens are warned that they must remain indoors after 7 p.m. nightly till 6 a.m. the following morning. Only the police, military, constables and civic guards on duty are allowed in the streets. Anyone disobeying this order will do so at his peril and will be liable to be shot on sight.

The Battle of Fordsburg

Civil war conditions prevailed all along the Rand that day. The fiercest fighting broke out at Fordsburg, where the strikers fired at a train leaving the station. This was followed by an exchange of shots with mounted police. A rumble of excited voices, as of distant thunder, rose from the crowd as they hurriedly dispersed. Both sides suffered casualties in the first few minutes. An ambulance was early on the scene and carried away a few mounted police. The steady and persistent fire of the strikers disconcerted the ranks of the police, their hard detached faces darkened by fear. Wounded horses neighed in terror. Horses without men, and men without horses, scattered wildly without order or discipline. A riderless horse galloped down the main street, reins and saddle leathers flapping against his steaming sides. There was a deafening crash as he wheeled to the right and shot through a plate-glass window. The blood gushed from him in little sprays as he lay there, first struggling convulsively to rise, but finally succumbing. A number of strikers, carrying rifles and bandoliers, mounted the police horses they had captured. Sniping by the strikers was directed by a system of signalling, and the police made a number of arrests from the town side.

Trenches were dug in the open square facing the strikers' headquarters, and streets were barricaded. They tore up the

pavements, broke the doors of the houses, wrenched trees from the ground. Inside the building, mattresses and furniture were piled up against the windows, at which men took up firing positions like players taking their places on the stage.

In the afternoon a sharp skirmish developed between the strikers entrenched in the open square and the police on the mine-dump to the south. In the shelter of trees and in gardens the strikers, concealed completely from view, declared their presence by the vicious whip-lash sting and menace of rifle-fire. The policemen on the dump fired down into these covers where no mark was visible, except for an instant's exposure of an arm or face. A mile away people went to and fro in the streets of Johannesburg heedless of what was going on, or maybe cocking an ear now and again as a burst of firing forced their attention. Suddenly everyone was in a hurry. Their eyes fixed on the ground, they swarmed the streets, dodged and doubled through the traffic which had perceptibly diminished. The steel shutters of the shops were down and the cafés were closed all of a sudden.

'Those blighters on the dumps are getting surrounded,' said an old working man on a roof. 'There are four thousand men coming from Benoni and Boksburg to wipe 'em out. Yes, that's what. The police, blast 'em, are caught. You see, the strikers' commando has been figuring this out for months.'

'Where's the commando?' I asked

'Oh, they're all right. They're in the kraal, down there. Got machine-guns on the roofs. Planned it all right, they have. Been studying it all right.'

'From Ireland?'

'No, from Russia. They've got the police all right. And then they'll get the rest like they have in Russia. They're running, see. There's two of them on the move—they're done.'

Four dark figures appeared erect on the skyline, moving east, and three others dropped down an incline at the eastern end of the dump that promised a safe return to the town police station. The

rifle-fire from the concealed marksmen below rose to a shrill scream as magazines were emptied as fast as fingers could press the trigger and work the bolt. A thin cheer came from the spectators, and a waving of handkerchiefs from women. On the summit of the dump appeared a little square of white. The white flag was raised. A figure stood up. Four others stood up together, and the cheering was renewed. A body of ten policemen on the dump slowly moved west with the white flag above them. It was clear to everyone that they were supporting a wounded man. The spectators roared and threw their hats in the air. A housewife carrying a basket came trotting along the edge of the pavement. She asked a man standing in the doorway of a shop how she was to get behind the danger zone.

'Madam,' said the man, lifting his hat, 'you'll have to keep to the left side of the street before you. When you come to a corner, don't cross the street at once. Wait and see if it is safe. There's going to be skin and hair flying soon.'

'Poor, young creatures,' she murmured, 'there'll be many a mother mourning before it's over. Worse than wild-cats.'

She gave a sigh of weariness and calmly went down into the danger zone. A man coming from the side stopped to wipe his forehead. 'Just saw a woman shot through the thigh as she tried to cross the road. Funny times, eh?' 'A fine example we are showing to the Natives,' the other replied.

In the late afternoon a military plane with bombs visible from its rack circled above Fordsburg. Thousands were spectators to the thrilling sight of the plane coming within striking distance of its target, the strikers' headquarters. It made a sharp ascent as the commandos' riflemen let fly with all they had. There was an appearance of fateful purpose in the rigid wings of the plane and its effortless movement; in its strong indifference to the hail of bullets that greeted it; in the wide circles to regain position; and in the swoop to renewed offensive. We thought it had disappeared, when a shining metal body suddenly gleamed in the setting sun.

There was the familiar, inexorable circle and swoop. The sharp rattle of rifle-fire was followed by the dull explosion of a bomb. The walls of a building well away from the target lurched forward hesitatingly. When the dust settled only the skeleton remained, as though the flesh had been ripped off.

Night fell over the havoc—and a dominating quiet with it as the rifle-fire ceased. The city was wrapped in a tomb-like darkness. Armed strikers stood around field-kitchens which sent out sparks into the night, the weapons glinting in the light of the fires. Men sprawled on the ground with the rifles at their side. The sentries in the distance were vaguely defined against the infinite dark.

The government forces suffered disastrous set-backs everywhere, and the commandos occupied important key-positions which yielded vast stores of ammunition. General Smuts, who was in Cape Town attending Parliament, decided to take command personally in an effort to retrieve the position. Next night his special train drew into Potchefstroom station, eighty-eight miles from Johannesburg. He stepped into a waiting car and made for Johannesburg—‘the Mecca of hooliganism’, as he called it. At Booysens, six miles from his destination, a striker’s picket held up his car. Smuts told the driver to move on. The man with the rifle hesitated. The car carrying the rich prize sped into the night.

‘The total evacuation of Fordsburg must be completed by tonight (Sunday),’ said a government proclamation, showered in thousands of leaflets from an aeroplane. ‘An artillery bombardment will begin at 11 a.m. tomorrow (Monday). All evacuees must follow the route to the Agricultural Grounds as indicated in the diagram below.’

The leaflets, like sparkling snowflakes, came slowly down in the streets where they were eagerly picked up by the people. Children ran after them as they fell and collected as many as they could. Thousands of families quitted their homes at a moment’s notice, ourselves amongst them. Those who could command the

use of vehicles did so. Within a short time hundreds were laden with bedding, pots, trunks and household goods, the less fortunate having secured handcarts and bicycles. The rest of the fleeing people carried what they could by hand. The exodus began at six o'clock in the morning. For hours the road from Fordsburg to the Agricultural Grounds carried an unending procession of men, women, children, perambulators, carts, pets. A family could be seen trudging along—father, mother, children—hand in hand, pouring out of a suburb soon to become the scene of desperate conflict. Ghost-like creatures, their eyes staring hungrily from their gaunt faces, kept flooding into the grounds. Horses and mules roamed about grazing. Thousands of humans settled down, thickly packed, in the various sheds; thousands of others were grouped under trees; many wandered about, carrying loads and looking for resting places. Under a tree a mother tried to feed two mites; a little distance away girls played with a skipping rope and laughed gaily. A large number of domestic pets had been brought along by homeless families, and a little girl was nursing a kitten. Soldiers and police wove their way through the crowds searching for arms. Improvised for the purpose, the grounds were totally inadequate to receive the unending and chaotic flood of humanity. As darkness descended, there was a rude and wholesale tearing of the veil from all the intimacies.

That night both sides were preparing. Very little happened, except for the ragged, meaningless fire which now and then swept overhead. The sentries were on the watch. The trenches were alive with voices—unconcerned voices, voices of resignation and authority. But otherwise nobody was much aware of the enemy on the other side of the valley. In the moonlight they were like remote insects dodging to and fro behind the parapets, which could be seen through the rolls of zigzagging barbed wire. Sometimes a black dot, which was a head, would pause for a moment, impudently exposed. Midway between the two lines of trenches stood a bullet-chipped tree, thrusting upwards tragically.

The birds would stop there for a moment and hasten away—as if, summer or winter, this was no sanctuary. The hours dragged as battle tension mounted. The men were little inclined to sleep.

The bombardment

Next day was a glorious African morning, and in the warm sunlight Fordsburg seemed little different from its normal aspect. The red-roofed slope to the west of the town was ominously quiet, however, and its deserted streets spoke more plainly than any disorderly uproar of the upheaval that the district sheltered. Here and there a tiny figure darted across an empty highway to scuttle like a rabbit into its hole as some grateful shelter presented itself.

It wanted one minute to eleven o'clock when we heard the first gun from Auckland Park, about two miles away on our right, give a strident bark full of menace. Then the guns went off on all sides with a devilish metallic crash like steel being shattered on an anvil, mingling with the nervous and irritable hiss of shrapnel shells. Black mushrooms of smoke bloomed along the valley, and puffs of shrapnel flecked the air above, floating till they melted into one another. The biggest guns now came into action, their tremendous echoing roar making the earth tremble and moan and vomit up cascades of clods and stones. Fumes of hot steel and fresh-turned soil hung in the air. From the roofs of the sheds where we were perched we could see uprooted trees flung high up, coming down like rockets, and bouncing into the air in death leaps.

A tank made its strange way down a deserted street towards Fordsburg, bristling with machine-gun barrels, but devoid of every sign of life. It had to make a wide detour to avoid a donkey which stood imperturbable in the road, and the animal flicked its left ear as the tank rumbled past. An aeroplane circling in the air above dropped leaflets telling the strikers that their position

was hopeless since tens of thousands of burghers from the countryside had moved on the Rand, capturing one town after another. This proved to be correct. The artillery barrage ceased, and the soldiers closed in on the commando's positions.

The officers in the government trenches looked more anxiously at their watches, as the moment approached for the assault on the strikers' trenches. Fisher and Spendiff were in a long line of men crouching, their bayonets peeping over the edge of the trench. They were bunching, as if they felt safer when closer together.

At a given signal the government forces forsook their cover and rushed forward. Their bayonets gleamed in the smoke that had gathered like a mist about the battlefield. The bullets whizzed, sang and hissed. Company after company moved forward, stooping, a bunch of humped shapes like huge, black mushrooms gliding slowly forward. They moved on, foot by arduous foot. The nearer they drew to the strikers' machine-gunners—who occupied small cramped islets near their rampart—the more slowly they went. Two men had fallen. Three more lay moaning on the ground. Soon the field was dotted with dead and wounded. The cross-fire from the machine-gunners tore at them and made them jump in spasms.

They were now at the barbed-wire entanglements. Ploughing their way through the openings made by wire-cutters, they lifted the trailing stuff delicately aside. Every loophole in the strikers' trenches was spouting jets of flame. Grenades checked their fire. Fisher, at the head of his men, jumped up and, with the others crowding about him, dashed up the short, steep slope on which the parapet stood. Drunk with battle fury, they charged at each other, shouting, and fought hand to hand. Rifle-butt against helmeted skull. Flying arms and bent backs. Everything turned dizzily—guns, blood, arms, distorted faces, blinded eyes, gnashing teeth. The wounded and dying screamed. A *mêlée* of hands, of teeth, of wide-open bloodshot eyes like those of wild beasts. And under the feet the still warm corpses.

The strikers retreated on to the Trades Hall. The government forces found the going more difficult when they reached the suburb itself. Every house and tenement was furiously contested. In the last crowded hour, with the cracking of rifles and the whistle of bullets overhead, Spendiff and Fisher stood out. Indifferent to the price they were to pay, they faced the tragic curtain calmly. From the balcony of the Trades Hall, Fisher was directing operations. A phthical cough interrupted his commands. He had been hit on the left arm and he carried it in a white sling.

By evening there were enough sick and wounded to make up a convoy of ambulance loads. Cries of wordless agony and grinding of teeth could be heard everywhere. The convoy moved up the road torn by shrapnel and gun-fire, jolting its load of broken and dying men; it curved up the hill and disappeared over the rise. More wounded continued to stream in on stretchers, and their moans and the darkness melted into one. A drizzle began to fall on the dead and the wounded, the exhausted and panic-stricken. The birds wheeling overhead croaked excitedly.

The Fordsburg battle was over. The lonely red banner flew from the roof of the Trades Hall, pathetically fluttering a faint message until the government forces removed it. When darkness fell all resistance to the government forces ended. The burghers swept through the houses. They seized everything they could lay their hands on, paying special attention to mirrors, clocks and other knick-knacks which fascinated their rural minds. Along the silent, empty streets long lines of men from the commandos who had been rounded up marched under guard—tired, tattered and physically broken. As they snaked their way towards the hastily-erected prisoners' camp hundreds of rifles and machine-guns were trained on them.

In the folds of night, out in the loneliness of the hills to the south of Johannesburg, the soldiers wreaked a heavy vengeance

on rebel suspects betrayed by spies and informers who were ingratiating themselves with the authorities. A band of Transvaal Scottish, smarting from their heavy losses, swooped down on the home of the Hanekoms in one of the southern suburbs—a spy had informed that there had been sniping from their house. There was a crash of glass as a soldier beat the door with his rifle-butt.

‘Put them up,’ the soldier called out as he entered, revolver in hand. ‘Where’s the gun you were going to set up a republic with?’

‘I never had a gun in my life,’ Hendrik, the eldest of the three brothers, said. He was led out. His mother followed and pleaded, ‘Can I bring him some dinner?’

‘No, missus, I don’t think he’ll no more require dinner,’ the soldier answered. He handed him over to the troop.

Dan Hanekom was led out of the house. ‘I saw my employer this morning, and he told me that I could start work tomorrow,’ Dan said. ‘I don’t think you’ll no more require to start work,’ came the reply.

Ben Hanekom came out of the house crying and begging for mercy. The three Hanekom brothers were found in the fields riddled with bullets. Splashes of red stood out flamboyantly against the grey rocks where they had faced the firing-squad.

Four days after the fighting was over the burghers assembled at the Wanderers, near the centre of the city, before departing for their farms. They were addressed by General Smuts.

‘There was a feeling that the government had no support,’ he began.

‘The government can only roar like a lion, but can do nothing else,’ they taunted us. But we knew our strength. The government knew that when the country was in need they could rely on the support of the burghers, and we patiently waited. When they started killing police and soldiers, we knew what was on. Then we made the call. We did not give you much time, but, loyal burghers, we knew we could rely on you. Believe me, I did not have a sleepless night. I slept like a general in the middle of his army, with the consciousness that if danger threatened thousands and tens of thousands

would stand by him, and would not stay and ask the reason why. You had nothing, only horses, saddles, bridles, but your one thought was to do your duty, and I was not anxious.

He paused for a moment and looked along the ranks of horsemen.

The majesty and the power of the law have to be maintained (he thundered). We are building a nation. We are building a country. You can never build a nation with lawlessness. No, let us build something greater and finer. Let this country rest on the foundations of law and order, and not on hooliganism and lawlessness. You can go back to your homes and your farms with a clean conscience, and with the knowledge that for years to come we shall have peace and prosperity. You can go and sow your mealies, look after your sheep, and carry on your farming activities. And we know that when you are wanted, without pay or reward, you will realize your duty towards your country. I hope you will soon be back at your homes, and that there will be more prosperity and no locusts.

Cheering rang through the arena when he concluded. It was followed by raucous laughter as an alarm-clock inside a burgher's knapsack pierced the air. 'The General is a clever man,' one of the burghers said, his clothes bulging with loot. 'They say he's a philosopher.'

Trial and execution

Thousands were unable to gain admission to the trial of Taffy Long, a strike leader who was being charged with the murder of Johannes Marais during the fighting in Fordsburg. A strikers' court had sentenced Marais to death for being a police spy, and Long had executed him. A special court of three judges was set up after the revolt had been crushed, and the sentences were very heavy. Several hundred had been killed in the fighting, and feeling was running high. The judges had been unable to agree the first time Long was tried, and a retrial was ordered. The trial and denouement greatly influenced the course of South African politics.

The first witness called by the prosecution, a Mr Richardson, said:

I was sitting in my house drinking tea when I heard someone run on to the veranda. I went out to see what was happening. A man covered in blood was moaning, 'Mercy! mercy!' His dropping blood made a scarlet trail behind him. When I saw that I knew him, I asked him to come inside. He then said he wanted to make a statement. We sat at the table, and I wrote every word he said.

Then the prosecutor read the dying statement:

Under the fear of death, and with no hope of recovery, I, Johannes Marais, swear that Taffy Long, or McLaughlin as he is also known, leader of the Fordsburg commando, small and fair-haired, caused my wounds, after the people's court sentenced me to death for being a police spy. While I was standing against the wall at Ansteys, pleading for my life, he fired and I dropped. I made a big mistake to move after that first shot. He fired two more shots at me with his pistol. I then realized I was finished. After he left, I just managed to raise myself and stumble along, with blood pouring from me. I came to the house of Jack Richardson, whom I know—he's been a good customer of mine for years.

There was comic relief to lessen the dramatic tension. Much depended on whether the colour of the accused's hair tallied with the description as given in Marais's statement. The defence counsel called a Mrs Jackson to give evidence in this connexion.

'Do you know the accused well?' was his first question.

'Very well,' she replied, 'I'm a midwife, I confined his wife.'

'Was this always the colour of his hair?'

'Quite definitely.'

The prosecutor wanted to know what made her so emphatic.

'A midwife is always glad when she can see the father in the child,' she replied amid laughter which the Judge had to suppress.

The Judge-President's summing up was followed with painful attention. He was obviously very deeply affected himself as he began his fateful speech.

As to the dying declaration (he said) there is some element of doubt as to the identity of Taffy Long. But it is to me a clear declaration that Taffy Long is the person responsible for Marais's death—there is no suggestion that anyone else can be Taffy Long. Marais's statement describes him as 'small'. True, I would not describe him as a small man. But 'small' and 'tall' are relative terms. As to the question of his hair, there has been an attempt to change its colour—the government pathologist has found the presence of crystals of permanganate of potash. This is incriminating. Then we have to consider the character of the accused. It is quite clear that he is a man of courage—his bearing shows it. And it is clear that he was in such a condition of stern excitement as to be capable of doing the deed with which he is charged. The accused has been defended pertinaciously and ably. But we find ourselves compelled to come to the conclusion that the Crown has proved its case against him. The evidence leads us to believe that Marais was condemned by the so-called people's court, and that the accused undertook the task of carrying it out. In pursuance of this task, he killed Marais under circumstances which clearly and incontestably amount in law to murder.

A murmur of excitement spread through the court. The accused looked pale, but otherwise unmoved. The Judge wrote for a moment, and then the Registrar stood up and signalled to the orderly to command silence. It was his stentorian and thrice repeated 'Hear Ye', preceding a death sentence, which warned the waiting throng outside the door that the fate of the accused was sealed. Ordered to stand up, Long came to his feet with a jerk, and stood stiffly erect. Behind his back he held his light tweed cap.

'Have you anything to say why the sentence of death should not be passed?' the Judge asked.

Long began to grip the wooden rail of the dock nervously.

'Only a few years back I lay drenched in water and soaked in blood in the trenches of Flanders,' he began. His face was flushed red, and his eyes were bloodshot.

Those were the immortal days when the Empire fought to make the world safe for democracy. We all marched together, went on short rations together, fought together, and wondered if the sun would again shine through the troubled sky, and the last post would be sounded for suffering humanity.

You cannot tramp, and suffer, and fight, and go hungry without something forming inside of you. In the midst of shells we groped our way to death, believing in our sacrifices. Yes, we were the heroes then. But what did we find when we got back from the hell of war? I have listened to fine words about the dignity of the law. What do the mineowners care about our homes and the dignity of our lives? If they thought they could grind an ounce of gold from the Union Jack they would put it through the mills of their mines.

‘It is my duty,’ the judge pronounced in a quiet, clear voice, ‘—and no more painful duty ever falls upon a court—to pass the only sentence which the law permits in respect of murder.’ He went on:

I have never been forced to such a conclusion with greater pain or reluctance than in this present case. So far as the evidence discloses, you are a man of irreproachable character, except in this charge. You also have a very fine war record. The court certainly does not regard your crime as being in the category of premeditated murder for sordid motives. While I say this, one must not lose sight of the fact that the death of the unfortunate man Marais cannot be regarded as necessary to the cause you were endeavouring to further. I am willing to believe that the feelings of hostility which had been engendered in the lamentable events of those few days, on top of the disturbed times following the war and the Russian Revolution, led you to do what in your sober moments, less excited moments, you would never have dreamt of doing. These are circumstances which may weigh with the authorities—I cannot say whether they will, and if the sentence will be carried out in its entirety or not.

He paused for a few moments as if to take breath. ‘The sentence which the court has to pronounce is that you be hanged by the neck until you be dead, at such time and place as may be appointed, and that in the meantime you be detained according to law.’

Long stood for a moment, and then stepped briskly down the stairs from the dock and marched out, preceded and followed by police. Personal farewells were shouted to him from the body of the court, against a background of sobbing.

Six weeks passed. On a Wednesday news reached Johannesburg that Taffy Long had not been reprieved, and that the execution

would take place on Friday at 7 a.m. A mass demonstration was called for Thursday evening in front of the City Hall to stage a march on Pretoria gaol, where the execution was to take place, a distance of thirty-six miles. Banners stood out defiantly against the sombre sky.

'There's electricity in the air,' someone said. 'If you brush your hair sparks will fly out.'

The clatter of hoofs heralded the arrival of the first batch of soldiery. They sat on their horses as if they had been born in the saddle. Jeers greeted their arrival. Then came police, mounted and on foot—men in blue and in khaki, all looking rather bored, as is the way of self-possessed officialdom.

The scene now had a cinematic quality. In the centre of the picture were the mounted police and soldiers. They were formed up on the southern end of the square. A huge mass of men and a few women, in the centre, was being swelled from all points of entry. The crowd was at its densest just in front of the horsemen. Facing the soldiers on the northern end was a mounted section of the police. A dismounted portion was being held in reserve on the left of the troop. No attempt was made to keep the people from massing there. The benches on the northern end were occupied by Africans, who looked on in wonderment from a fairly safe distance. The forces received little attention from the crowd, though a flutter now and again seemed to indicate trouble. The hat-waving made the horses in front restive. The southern side had been left clear; in case of trouble the forces were to move and drive any disorderly elements out, and disperse them through the side streets.

A cheer filtered up into the sunlight. It was followed by the momentary spreading of the crowd for no apparent reason. A tradesman's cart went peacefully by to deliver milk to the prosaic. A tram moved like a slug through the dense mass that had overflowed on to the streets and pavements. Several times the police line broke with the restlessness of the horses caused by the

waving of banners and shouting. A cordon of footmen were lined up in front of the mounted men in an effort to steady the horses.

A huzzah greeted a big body of demonstrators headed by a band on a lorry playing the Marseillaise. A film of dust rose like a vapour over the heads of the multitude. The Corner House across the way, headquarters of one of the big mining houses, was like a grand-stand packed with sightseers on the roofs and balconies, or grouped at the windows.

'Why don't you be white men and come down?' shouted a demonstrator with flaming colours streaming from various points of his clothing.

Frenzied shouts greeted the first speaker as he mounted the lorry. Dead silence followed the band's playing of 'The Red Flag'.

'Are we afraid of the police and the military?' the speaker started his harangue.

'We're ready to die any moment,' came back the response from the frenetic mass. Before it had subsided the Chief Magistrate, accompanied by an officer, mounted the lorry and asked the crowd to disperse quietly in the name of the law.

'We must maintain our fundamental rights as citizens to meet on the Market Square,' the speaker replied challengingly.

There was a roar of approval from the mass of the people.

A speaker sitting on the lorry stepped forward and urged the abandonment of the demonstration. His remarks were resented, and the speaker continued. He had not got very far when a strong body of dismounted police wedged their way into the crowd and up to the platform. When they reached the lorry, mounted police forced their way in from the other side.

The soldiers were again in the saddle ready for action. The dismounted men were in trouble, hemmed in by the crowd. Orders were given to the mounted police to ride through. The crowd was divided into two sections. The edge of the crowd

began to fray, women and children rushing down sidestreets. The Africans ran off with excited cries.

The police, once in command of the vicinity of the platform, called on those who occupied it to come down. Excitement mounted as a pistol shot shattered the night. A man was hustled off in a waiting car. The police opened out, and using their staves charged into the crowd, which scattered. A man with a Red Flag rallied them. The retreat soon stopped, and more stones and bottles were being hurled at the police, a few of whom were carried unconscious into a neighbouring shop. The man waving the Red Flag urged the crowd to regain the Square. It was soon tight with people again. A number of policemen seized the lorry from which the speeches had been delivered, and rushed it across to where the soldiers were lined up. As if some mystic force had suddenly taken charge of the chaotic mass, banner after banner moved away at regular intervals. Soon it shaped itself into a monster procession eight deep, flanked by a heavy contingent of mounted police. The lights of the city ended, and they headed into the inky darkness that covers the veld at night. It was a starless sky, and the marchers could scarcely see the trees lining the road that unrolled straight before them. In the rear there suddenly rose to the sky the strains of the Welsh anthem:

*Land of my fathers, O land of the free,
The home of the harp so soothing to me.
Thy noble defenders were noble and brave
For freedom their heart's life they gave.*

The Welshman had started—Englishmen, Afrikaners, Jews and others joined. This battle hymn had many times echoed through the hills and valleys of Wales, where men had fought stirring battles for their rights. Further along the night there rang out the anthem of the Transvaal Republic, and there swept through the mass memories of the Boer Republic holding at bay for three years the might of imperial Britain. Then there burst forth the 'Warszavianka' which had inspired the people of Eastern

Europe to defy the knout of the Cossack and the prisons of the Tsar.

Everyone in the Pretoria jail was conscious that Thursday's sunset was the last in the lives of the three strike leaders who were going to be executed the following morning. (The two others were Hull and Lewis, who had also been sentenced to death in another trial.) The dying day made the six hundred convicts restless. In the night the sky became overcast. An occasional flash of lightning, followed by a rumble of thunder, further frayed the nerves of the prisoners. On arrival at their sections to receive their evening food, they inquired of each other as to the fate of the condemned men. The answer was like a knell: 'No hope!'

The thunder rolled like an artillery duel. The storm broke, and the rain came pouring down. It suddenly subsided, as suddenly as it had come up.

With half an hour to spare the procession, much thinned out, reached the walls of the Pretoria jail. They massed at the spot nearest to the gallows chamber. Their nerves unbearably on edge, they were counting the seconds for the railway hooter to sound the hour of seven—the fatal hour.

The prison bell did not ring on the morning of the execution, for the condemned men were not to know that their end was at hand. The prisoners remained locked in their cells. The hangman, the government doctor, the chief warden and the sheriff entered the death cells at seven punctually. The condemned men rose briskly and stood to attention. They were handcuffed behind their backs and placed in line ready for the march to the gallows. Heavy doors creaked noisily on hinges like lids of coffins, followed by the thud of heavy footsteps. No words were spoken—no orders were given. Each one in the drama knew his part. The prison was like a cathedral. Suddenly Taffy Long broke into 'The Red Flag'. He was joined by the other two.

*The people's flag is deepest red,
It shrouded oft our martyred dead . . .*

The steps of the men on the way to the platform of death were in time with the rhythm of the song. A loud noise, like a mingled cheer and wail, suddenly came from the jail. The mass of condemned criminals forgot that they were outcasts, and they too began to chant the song of revolt as an accompaniment to the march of death. The strains carried over the prison walls and were taken up by those who had tramped through the night to keep vigil at the gallows. Like a ship departing, the voice of the condemned men became faint as the gallows door closed on them. The hangman waited for the refrain to end before he placed the noose round their necks. The gallows trap on which the three men stood dropped with a reverberation that shook the whole building. The pannikins on the floor of the condemned men's cells rattled. A painful silence reigned. Hardened criminals who had grown grey behind prison bars wept silently in their cells. They went back to their dagga and their sodomy and their dirt. But there remained with them, like a lash across a convict's back, that moment when they sang hopefully from their ash-heap of ruin.

'These men had a message,' one warder was heard to say to another.

The three men's funeral was the biggest in the history of South Africa. There can be no doubt that the feeling it created led to Smuts's defeat in the general election of 1924, and altered the course of South African history.

What of Smuts's attitude towards the strike? It is not easy to give a simple answer. There were conflicting moods and motives among the strikers. Very prominent was the pogrom attitude towards the Africans, who were completely innocent victims. This genuinely incensed Smuts, and he was fully justified in adopting the severest measures to end it. For the rest, his actions were too Draconian. The use of artillery, aeroplanes and tanks

was too drastic, even for those disturbed times. It strongly resembled Churchill's impetuosity after the first world war, and reflected the class antagonism that prevailed at the time. When the classes became more accommodating both these statesmen mellowed greatly. In later life, Smuts, like Churchill, gained devoted friends amongst those who had once been his implacable enemies.

One such was William Andrews. He came from the British working class—he was a fitter and turner. I have seldom come across a more supremely dignified appearance in a man. He hailed from East Anglia, the same part as Charles Dickens's Peggotty, and he had all the solidity and nobility of that character. But he would have been less humble in the presence of Mrs Steerforth.

Andrews's appearance alone singled him out as a leader of men. And his mind kept pace with his appearance. His writing and speeches were always perfectly composed, and a model of clarity and dignity. His voice, even in public, never rose much above a whisper, but it was more compelling than a clarion-call. Both in manner and ability he was qualified to be the editor of *The Times*. And nobody on *The Times* would have known that he was a fitter and turner. I have seen working-class leaders with extremely interesting faces and of outstanding ability. There was the Irishman Harry Haynes, a Jimmy Larkin type and a magnificent orator. His features were interesting in a mobile, dynamic sort of way, as were also his speeches and articles. But I have never encountered the marmoreal dignity of William Andrews. And, curiously enough, it in no way estranged him from the masses, with whom he mingled easily as Bill Andrews.

He and General Smuts had been life-long opponents, first in Parliament, of which Andrews was a member before the first world war, and then during the numerous industrial disputes—Andrews was imprisoned by Smuts after the 1922 Revolt. In his later years, though still nominally a member of the Communist

Party, he had long since retired from active politics and was living in a remote suburb of Cape Town. Smuts must have spent some time finding his address, in order to send him a letter of felicitation, which read:

My dear Andrews,

Though belated by a few days, I wish to send you my warm congratulations on your eightieth anniversary, and wish you health and strength for the years that still lie ahead. We two—almost the same age—have passed through an era of great events, and have much to look back upon and to ruminate over. Often our courses have clashed, but always, too, I hope, there has been respect for each other in spite of the differences. And now as we near the end, we can salute each other and wish each other well for what may lie ahead.

With much good wishes, I remain,

Yours faithfully,

J. C. SMUTS.

Andrews replied as follows:

My dear General,

Thank you very much for your kind message of congratulation and good wishes on the eightieth anniversary of my birthday.

Yes! In spite of our differences, which I suppose arise from the observation of social phenomena from different angles, we have at least one thing in common—our age.

Those who remember and took some part in affairs from the early days of the Witwatersrand goldfields are becoming few in number. Their work, whatever it may have been, is drawing to a close. It should therefore be possible, as you suggest, for mutual respect to exist between old warriors who have fought well and honourably, although generally on the opposite sides of the barricades. I hope to congratulate you in a few days on completing your eightieth year.

Your life has been crowded with stirring scenes and dramatic happenings, with great responsibilities shouldered, and with international and national honours conferred such as fall to the lot of few men.

I agree, we can salute and pass on with calmness and dignity to meet whatever the fates have prepared.

With very good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

W. H. ANDREWS.

What this letter meant to Smuts is evident from his acknowledgment:

My dear Andrews,

What a very nice and welcome letter you have written me! I do want to say to you in all sincerity, that I appreciate it very much. So old comrades of the wars salute each other as they pass from the stage.

Yours very sincerely,

J. C. SMUTS.

Smuts died within a month of writing this letter. He must have had a death premonition. Many of his actions during his lifetime justifiably gained him the reputation of being a hard, ruthless man. The correspondence with Andrews establishes his deep and essential humanity. Andrews died six months later.

Gleams of Sharpeville

The whites were on the whole comfortably placed, and viewed our call for a new world with either amused interest or open hostility. The hopes engendered by the Russian Revolution had dissipated, and, internally, there were a number of factors which helped to tame the rebellious mood of the workers, so ardently displayed in the Rand Revolt. We have seen that an important political change had come over the country with the defeat of General Smuts in 1924, and his supersession by the Pact government—a coalition of the Nationalists under General Hertzog and the Labour Party led by Colonel Creswell. The result was very much the same as the policy of coexistence pursued by the British trade unions after the General Strike of 1926.

But it was different with the work among the blacks. The soil was virgin, but there were prospects ahead of us. Where in the past the Africans had been completely inarticulate politically, the words 'trade union', 'committee' and 'organization' were beginning to ring alluringly in their ears, and they spoke about them at their beer parties and over their paraffin-tin fires. The

stirrings set in motion by the Communist Party reached a convulsive stage with the appearance on the scene in 1927 of one Clements Kadali, a Swahili of exceptional ability who began to organize the Africans in a comprehensive trade union which he called the I.C.U.—Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union. Kadali, who strongly resembled Tom Mboya, was possessed of exceptional ability; he was shrewd and able and a demagogue to the tip of his tongue. His influence over the Africans was immediate and complete. A new evangelist had appeared on the scene, and he carried all before him. I have been at gatherings where, after a harangue by Kadali, thousands of Africans emptied their pockets and placed everything before their 'saviour'. So spectacular was the growth of his power that in the 1929 election the Prime Minister, General Hertzog, negotiated with him for the support of the African voters in a couple of Cape constituencies where the Africans still enjoyed some kind of a franchise. And not long after, Minister Walter Madeley was ejected from the Pact Cabinet because he had negotiated with Kadali.

But the heady wine of power soon upset Kadali's balance. He began to live like an eastern potentate, surrounding himself with black belles who bestowed on him not only their favours but also the spirochaete. Both Kadali and his movement went into rapid decline. Apart from the personal factor, the movement was too bulky and unmanageable, embracing as it did the economic and political aspirations of the Africans—and like the dinosaur it failed to survive. But Kadali's work was not altogether profitless. Members of the party, and others close to the party, succeeded in laying solid foundations for a proper trade union movement, along the lines of Western Europe, and played a significant part in raising both the standard of living of the African workers—and also their political morale.

In 1927 the party launched its pass-burning campaign. The gleams of Sharpeville were becoming visible on the horizon.

One evening an African by the name of Nkosi appeared at the party headquarters and applied for membership. Nkosi was a cook. The chairman, in accepting him, quoted Lenin as having said that cooks would become administrators. Nkosi had a good brain, and was soon a favourite among the members. After meetings he would recount African lore and legend, of which he had an endless store. He told of the lion-haunted Lebombo Mountains where the wind blows ceaselessly, and where nothing grows except crystal flowers whose blossoms are lighter than air, and whose roots eat through granite. The place is inhabited by leopard-men and their women who walk invisibly over these mountains. Whoever strays there is struck down dead, and the crimson flowers blossom where the dead man's blood has flowed. Now and again the leopard-women appear through the storm-clouds. They glide like arrows of bronze. When you see them you have to follow, for you are irresistibly drawn by the lilt of their bodies and the glow of their flesh. And when you lie with those women, you never come down from the mountain again.

So much for the myths of long ago. Here and now there was the stern reality of racial discrimination. The Africans have to carry passes after nine o'clock in the evening; the police follow them like the leopard-men of the Lebombo and throw them into jail if they cannot produce a pass.

Dingaan's Day was chosen as the climax to the pass-burning campaign. On this day, in the year 1838, the Boer trekkers finally broke the power of Dingaan, King of the Zulus, when they defeated him on the banks of a river since called Blood River. Its waters were tinged with the blood of the Zulus mown down by the bullets of the Boers firing from their wagon-fortresses. The Boers celebrate this day with national rejoicing. Over the whole country prayer-meetings are held to thank the Lord for the defeat of the Canaanites, which made possible the establishment of white civilization in South Africa. For the Africans it has become a day of mourning and protest at their loss of freedom.

The party was preparing for the pass-burning meeting to be held in Shanty Town, and some of us went there the night before to distribute leaflets announcing the meeting, and to sell the party paper, *Freedom*.

Crawling over the top of a hill on the outskirts of Johannesburg, Shanty Town stood out like a leprous sore. Its several thousand shacks consisted of a rough framework of poles covered with sacking, and occasionally a corrugated iron structure defying the laws of gravity and architecture. The sugar-bags that made up the roofs and walls still bore the trade-mark, and each of the thousands of shacks was numbered in dark paint. The yellow of the hessian was washed out by the recent rains which had drenched the huts, and the occupants had slept standing because of the pools that had formed inside. All over were large, filthy puddles covered with coatings of rainbow-coloured slime. Shaggy, hungry-looking dogs wandered to and fro, too listless to bark. Here and there a candle glowed hopefully against the large, strange night from behind the dirty hessian. Out of the distance, like a sigh, came the sound of a train. I handed a leaflet to an African woman standing in the doorway of a shack.

'I'm suffering from chest pains, master,' she said with a note of sarcasm in her voice. 'I've been sleeping in the rain. You couldn't perhaps give me a blanket?'

There was the dark vitality of the soil about her rugged frame, a will to live that no misery could destroy.

'Will you buy this paper *Freedom*? It'll give you light,' I said to a passing African. 'The cost is only one penny.'

'For one penny I can buy a candle, master,' he replied.

A Salvation Army meeting was being held around the light of a petrol lamp. The preacher was saying: 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.' As he finished, the black bandsmen struck up a tune that was all brassy dissonance—too sinful to rise to heaven without God bending down in his mercy to receive it. An African came up the

road, his face truculent with drink, and his tongue snarling curses that cut through the night. 'There is nothing more terrible than to be an intellectual nigger,' he declaimed at the top of his voice. 'I don't only suffer as a black man, I also suffer as a personality. Can you believe it that a raw Boer policeman should ask me for a pass, when I've read Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*?' A white policeman, an African police-boy at his side, was busy thrusting the inquisitive, dancing light of his torch through the window of a shack. He grabbed the drunken African by one arm, the police-boy grabbed the other. They were soon surrounded by a ring of black faces and white eyes and teeth behind which lurked derision.

'Get away, niggers,' the policeman called out, his hand on the butt of his revolver.

'Niggers,' they repeated, as they slouched away sulkily. 'Who is he calling niggers, the Boer bastard?'

The strains of a guitar swept across the night. A loud altercation between a man and a woman was followed by the noise of a stone clattering against a corrugated iron fence, and a dozen startled dogs began to bark. There was an almost suffocating animal warmth in this honeycomb of dwellings. Small souls burning like tapers, but burning steadily, and capable of throwing menacing shadows on the crumbling walls that hemmed them in. These walls sweated. Here was a crawling, still life, a heavy negative sediment which had settled there, as if for ever.

We made our way home. Everywhere the dogs snarled at us, as if they had property to protect.

'I see you, white men,' a voice barked at us from a shack.

Thousands came to the meeting the following afternoon. The uneasiness became all the more pervasive as a group of white men gathered on its outskirts and soon showed their resentment. A bonfire was lit to dramatize the proceedings, and it was fed with passes as the speakers delivered their harangues. A white police captain at the head of a dozen white policemen armed with

revolvers, together with over a hundred African police armed with assegais, divided the speakers from the mass of demonstrators.

Nkosi, unruffled by interjections, raised his clenched fist in the air and began: 'When Dingaan was told that the Boers were coming, he called the fighting men together and said: "If we go forward, we die. If we go backward, we die. Let us go forward and die." They went forward, and the river's water carried much blood down to the sea. The northward path of the Boer trekkers is everywhere sodden with the blood of our people, and foggy with the smoke of their burning huts.' As he continued the tension mounted. 'I say that enough blood has flowed down the Blood River,' he called out.

There was a wild cry from the crowd.

'A kaffir's leg is always in the bush, no matter how much you may try to teach him,' a white man shouted.

The crowd swayed like corn in a storm and made for him. Above the din, there rang out a command—and the assegais of the black policemen sped towards Nkosi. The crowd broke and scattered. Nkosi lay dead on the lorry from which he had spoken, his body gaping with wounds.

We went to Nkosi's shack that evening to condole with his wife. We greeted her as we entered. Instead of returning the greeting, she said: 'You promised me freedom, but so far you've taken my bread-winner away.' At her side was a small child crying.

When morning came, Nkosi's wife went to the store and bought material for a shroud. She also ordered a coffin, which was to be made from solid, brown wood. For she wanted her dead to be dressed well, and lowered into the grave gently in a good coffin made of shining wood. It was the last thing she could do for him as he took leave of this rough, hard world.

They laid Nkosi to rest on the slopes of the hill to the north of Shanty Town. The undulating veld was very silent, as if solemn

in the presence of death. Sidney Bunting ended his funeral oration with the words of St Paul: 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.'

The struggles of Solly Sachs

I was able to observe at close quarters the vigorous fight Solly Sachs waged for the soul of the poor white becoming proletarianized—I am his brother. The fanaticism, courage and resource which Solly had brought with him from his background in Lithuania—the same milieu from which the leading American trade unionist Sidney Hillman hailed—proved of no avail in the long run; but he made a deep impact on South African affairs. Although he is now an exile in London, the work he did in fostering trade unionism among the Afrikaners and Africans remains of abiding value. The importance of the fight he waged resides in this: if he had succeeded in winning over the Afrikaner workers not only would he have robbed extreme Afrikanerdom of much of its motive power, but there would have arisen a Labour movement in South Africa along traditional Western European lines, which might have buttressed liberal democracy there and made it easier to build lines of communication with the evolving African proletariat.

The struggle Solly waged is worth recording, both because of its intrinsic importance and also because it reveals the considerable influence of Nazism in our affairs. But first we must note a number of political convulsions which shook the country at the time.

The 1929 world depression reached South Africa belatedly, in 1931, and it sobered up those who were drunk with Nationalism. The Nationalist Party lost an important by-election at Germiston; this set up a wobble in the machinery, which became a serious dislocation when Britain went off the gold standard. The Nationalist

government showed its independence by remaining on the gold standard, a stubborn attitude that made it impossible for the farmers to export their produce competitively to Britain, the main market. The farmers' produce rotted, till economics dampened their Nationalist sentiment. It is a recurring motif in our affairs, this counterpoint of materialism and idealism.

There was a stalemate in the struggle to bring South Africa off the gold standard, until Tielman Roos, a judge of the Appeal Court and one-time Nationalist Minister, stepped down from the Bench and in a triangular struggle for power forced Hertzog and Smuts to form a government which was a coalition of their two parties. The extreme section of the Nationalist Party, led by Dr D. F. Malan, would not follow their leader Hertzog into the Fusion government, and they broke away.

In November 1928 Solly was elected Secretary of the Garment Workers' Union. He had no specific knowledge of the industry, but he had ability. He had also made a close study of the struggles of the trade unions in Britain from the time the factory system was introduced, when conditions were not unlike those prevailing in the clothing industry on the Rand when he took over. Not only did Solly not come from the industry, but his whole appearance should have gone against his getting the post. How strange this bespectacled student must have appeared to the members, most of whom were Afrikaner girls from the hinterland. What were the qualities he possessed that enabled him to gather a devoted mass following about him within a few years, so that the whole government apparatus of the Nationalist Party had to be brought into play to dislodge him from his position?

One's first impression of Solly is something like the priestly Samuel on the way home after hewing Agag in two. There is much of Samuel about Solly, but there is much besides—a genuine humanity and a compassion for the underdog which bridged the gulf that separated him spiritually from the rank and file whose

interests he was serving. In the affairs of the union this despot was truly benevolent. He fought with determination and passion for the betterment of the poorly-paid workers, who, uprooted from the land, found in the towns all the hardships of estrangement on top of their harsh struggle for existence.

The ascendancy of Hitler from 1933 onwards greatly stimulated the rise of the Nazi movement in South Africa. In government circles General Hertzog, the Prime Minister, and Oswald Pirow, Minister of Defence and Nazi proselyte, backed Neville Chamberlain to the hilt; Smuts sided with Churchill. The extreme Nationalists under Dr Malan had gone into opposition; with the responsibilities of office removed from their shoulders, they began to embrace Nazi doctrine even more openly. The rise of Hitler also saw the rise of various 'shirt' movements, which stood outside of the regular party alignments and whose members were just straight, clean pogromists. Naturally enough, they singled out Solly for their attacks.

Four things made South African soil fertile for Nazi doctrine. In the first place, the Afrikaners have strong racial ties with the Germans, from whose stock many of them spring. Secondly, there is still much anti-British feeling among the Afrikaners. In the first world war (and long before the Irish did) they started a rebellion that was supported from German South-West Africa, as it was then known. They are quick off the mark in South Africa when it comes to rebellion. There was a repetition of this mood as the second world war approached and Germany, the enemy of Britain, offered the prospect of settling old scores. Again, thirty years ago there was still an appreciable poor white problem on the land and in the towns. Hitler gave these dwellers of the 'rural slums' a new hope with the slogan 'The Jews are our misfortune'. Finally, Hitler's extreme nationalism made an appeal to that section which itself made a cult of nationalism.

The Nazi elements made serious efforts to dislodge Solly from

the union. Funds were provided by the rich Afrikaner landowners for the setting up of a rival trade union body that would be national and not 'communistic' in character. A campaign against Solly was launched by the Afrikaans cultural societies, who called for a crusade 'to save the souls of the Afrikaner workers from the corruption of the foreigners, imperialists, communists, Jews, liberals and *Kafferboeties* [nigger-lovers]'.

In 1938 the Voortrekker centenary was celebrated. The occasion was utilized to fan the flames of nationalism. The climax to the celebrations was to be a monster gathering at the Voortrekker monument near Pretoria. As the memory of the Voortrekkers is hallowed by every Afrikaner, the Garment Workers' Union, with a predominantly Afrikaans membership, decided to participate in these celebrations as a workers' body. The response it evoked in the extremist nationalist section, which had succeeded in getting control of the celebration, is sharply revealed in one letter sent to Solly, which read:

I enclose herewith a specimen copy of a pamphlet published by me, in which I point out the mockery of our national traditions your participation in the centenary celebrations will mean. The same applies to your other communistic accomplices. The Afrikaner nation is busy uniting—to mobilize its resources against you and your sort. The thousands of Afrikaner daughters whom you have in your clutches will settle with you. Standing by them is the whole Boer nation, who are finding themselves in the Voortrekker year. Our people do not want anything to do with communism and the Jews—the high priests thereof—least of all. The day when we Afrikaners begin to settle with you Jews, you will find out that Germany is a Jewish paradise compared with what South Africa will be. The garment workers will soon be able to handle their Jewish bosses and do not need your so-called help. We Afrikaners acknowledge no classes, as you and your satellites are trying to introduce. Therefore we do not want the garment workers as a class to participate in the celebrations, but all together with us as Boers—the factory girl with the professor's wife. You and your kind, who all day organize and address kaffirs—will you dare to bring them also along to the celebrations? They are your fellow-workers and comrades. We challenge you to come to the celebrations, and this is our last warning.

With every country Hitler invaded, his satellites in South Africa became bolder. In June 1939 Charles Harris, the Secretary of the Mineworkers' Union, a Jew, and therefore the target for Nazi attacks, was shot dead outside his office by a political enemy; the assassin was sentenced to life imprisonment. It was generally considered a lucky escape for Solly. Other political assassinations followed, but Solly carried on as if nothing had happened. It was not unusual for him to be greeted by the remark: 'Are you still alive?' The chief of the CID warned him that his life was in danger and provided him with a gun. Threatening telephone calls reached him at all hours of the day—mostly in the early hours of the morning. But he stood his ground. The years of incessant struggle against a ferocious enemy tended to make Solly even harder. He bore down with all his strength on the fascist elements in the union. At one meeting a woman oppositionist, pointing her finger at him, started calling out hysterically: 'He is Satan!' Only those who have come face to face with Solly's great strength will know just what that woman felt.

The second world war saw a big influx of Coloured workers into the clothing industry, and tended to create friction. The fears of the whites in regard to the entry and advancement of Coloureds and blacks in industry are quite groundless, and are rooted in the past with all its racial clashes and not in the economic realities of the present. South Africa is an expanding country, woefully short of every type of labour. The industrialization of the country would bring many advantages to all sections. But when fear and logic contend, it is usually fear that prevails—especially when it is a very deep-rooted fear, that has been transmitted from generation to generation for over a hundred years.

In the Transvaal, until the second world war, the number of Coloured workers was small; but it steadily increased about 1935, when there was an economic boom. The Garment Workers' Union began to pay special attention to the organization of the

Coloured workers, and Solly applied himself to this task with his customary resource and energy. It was heartbreaking work, for he came up against the hostility of the whites, who were determined to keep the industry as their own special preserve. Only a person wholly sympathetic to the Coloureds, and feeling strongly for their pitiful struggles to gain some kind of footing in life—racially they are suspended in a twilight existence between black and white—could have made any headway against the insidious and ever-growing opposition of the whites. Some factories employed Coloured workers only, while a number employed both whites and Coloureds. With the spread of Nazi doctrine in South Africa, the agitation against the Coloureds grew in intensity and the union had to spend a good deal of its time to keep in check the racial animosities flaring up, now here, now there. *Apartheid* regulations were laid down in the factories for the use of separate rest-rooms and cloak-rooms. Where white and Coloured worked on one floor partitions had to be erected. Soon efforts were made to extend the area of *apartheid* to include separate time-clocks and separate entrances and exits. Signs were displayed on the lifts: 'For Europeans Only'. The Coloured workers refused to walk to work up several flights of stairs, much to the consternation of the European workers. There followed what became known as 'the battle of the lifts'. Let Solly himself tell of the despair that filled him during those days characterized by a fierce clash of colour:

To lead workers who are united in a struggle for higher wages and better conditions is not difficult. But when one finds the very same workers, who are themselves suffering exploitation and poverty, hating and persecuting their fellow workers merely because they belong to a different race, and supporting the fascists, then one comes very close to despair and needs strong nerves and a cool head to keep one's faith in humanity.

I remember one occasion when I received an urgent telephone message from a leading employer informing me that a strike had started at his factory on racial grounds. . . . I immediately went to the factory. The employer had to execute urgent orders and, not being able to find European table hands,

had engaged . . . a Creole, a widow with two children to support. One hundred and two European workers were employed in the factory . . .

I went into the large workroom and found all the machines standing idle and two ringleaders surrounded by a crowd of girls, shouting wildly and hurling abuse at their victim. The Creole woman . . . was standing alone, about ten yards away from the others. She was nervous and embarrassed and completely at a loss. The workers, normally disciplined, loyal members of the union, had turned themselves into a disorderly mob ready to lynch the unfortunate woman who had done nothing to harm them. I was so taken aback by what I saw that, for a moment, I did not know what to do. Then one of the leaders . . . shouted in Afrikaans: 'We Christians will not allow the *bastermeid* [half-breed] to work in this factory. Get the hell out of here.'

I was filled with horror and disgust. How loathsome and tragic the South African way of life seemed at that moment, as I watched this quiet, poor widow being abused and threatened by a crowd of otherwise decent, well-behaved white girls, solely on account of her different colouring.

'If you are a Christian,' I shouted, 'then I will gladly stay a heathen all my life. What right have you to call yourselves Christians? You abuse that poor woman. You want to throw her out into the street. You want to see her and her two children starve. How dare you call yourselves Christians when you have not a drop of compassion, of love and charity in you and all you want of Christianity is another crucifixion?'

A section of the workers were moved. A ballot was taken and the Creole woman was allowed to go on working. The voting was 61 in favour, 30 against.

This was Solly's finest moment in his long years of struggle. He rose to Mosaic stature, and, like his forbear, he was beginning to find the task of leading people out of bondage to freedom rather exacting. Strange indeed are the demons that lurk in the human soul. Many of the Coloureds are not free from racial chauvinism either, and look down on the Africans. Following a court decision in 1944, African women were eligible to become members of the Coloured branch of the union. The Coloureds put up a strong resistance to their admission, and this resistance was only overcome after a fierce struggle. There is enough inflammable material lying around this part of the world to start

* E. S. Sachs, *Rebels Daughters* (London, 1957), pp. 124-5.

a few really lively civil wars. What is so shattering is that sincere Afrikaner churchmen, driven by the racial storms, participate in the struggle to keep the Coloureds and Africans on the level of Ishmails for ever.

Solly's famous court actions numbered something like twenty, with the score 20 to nil in Solly's favour, and costing the losing litigants—Nationalist churchmen and newspapers—over £100,000. Solly used these court actions as a means of influencing public opinion, but he also loved them for their own sake. There are many contradictory strands in Solly's make-up. Nothing is so fascinating as his genuine reverence for law. Moses the Lawgiver was clearly his ancestor. His absolute devotion to socialism, with its contempt for the law of the propertied classes, makes no difference to Solly. He is held in thrall by the law, by its first principles, proliferations and majesty. It takes shape in his mind like a cathedral, with its tensions, thrusts and counter-thrusts. Solly hates the Nationalist government of South Africa for many reasons, but none so cardinal as its contempt for the rule of law.

The victory of the Nationalist Party in the 1948 general election was a turning point in the history of the country; among other things, it brought the struggle between the Nationalists and Solly to a head. They made it clear from the start that they were going to use the State apparatus to overcome all opposition. South African labour legislation places a great deal of arbitrary power in the hands of the Minister of Labour, and he did not hesitate to use it to embarrass such an inveterate enemy as Solly. After a number of sporadic skirmishes, which proved indecisive, the government 'named' Solly as a communist, although he had been expelled from the Communist Party in 1931. But the enactment carried retrospective force to the year 1930, and was clearly designed to rope Solly in.

The government was still feeling its way, and nearly two

years were to elapse before it struck the final blow. On May 19, 1952 Solly arrived at a meeting of the executive committee of the union to find two detectives waiting for him. They handed him an order from the Minister of Justice calling on him to resign from his union within thirty days. He was also prohibited forthwith from attending meetings, other than those of a religious, recreational or social nature. He decided to defy the Minister and address a protest meeting the following Saturday.

Saturday came. The town was tense. It was the first time the authority of the Nationalist government was being challenged. At 9.30 a.m. the shop stewards, with Solly at their head, marched with banners to the City Hall steps. They were greeted by a crowd of 15,000 people—one of the biggest crowds that had ever congregated there. After the police had indulged in a series of baton charges, Solly was bundled into a waiting police-van and driven away to the police station. Tension had been mounting the whole week. But the photographs of the policemen batoning the crowd, liberally displayed in the Press, served to heighten feeling against the government in general and Mr C. R. Swart, the Minister of Justice, in particular. A Sunday paper editorial headed 'There is Blood on Your Hands, Swart' indicated the rising temper.

Next Monday the Garment Workers' Union called a general strike throughout the industry; it was most effective. The government was taken by surprise at the violent reaction to its behaviour. It was difficult to fathom the state of public feeling throughout the country, as Johannesburg is overwhelmingly anti-Nationalist; but the government clearly had many anxious moments. It made every effort to tone things down, as was evident from the placatory note of its newspapers. Fortunately for the government, it shortly afterwards won a resounding victory in a parliamentary by-election in a country constituency, and this restored its morale. An adverse vote would without doubt have created a political crisis.

The truth of the matter is—and subsequent events have confirmed it—that the support behind Solly was more vocal than real. Sympathy there was in plenty, but never did it look like being translated into effective action. The white Labour movement, both political and industrial, revealed itself totally impotent. The Coloured workers alone were militant; the whites were on the whole either lukewarm or hostile. The mass of the people opposed to the government praised Solly for his courage, but did little else. In openly defying the Minister, Solly was trying to rally all the forces in an all-out struggle against the government. He did not come anywhere near succeeding. That Saturday on the City Hall steps was the meridian of his political life. After that it petered out in a series of court actions—he was being charged with defying the order of the Minister of Justice, for which the penalty is prison, without the option of a fine. He was sentenced to one year, lost an appeal, took it to the Appellate Division where he defended himself without counsel—and was given a suspended sentence.

There was nothing for Solly to do but to leave the country. The choice before him was to be a martyr, for the sake of the handclaps that would come his way, or to be smothered in obscurity, which would have been the greatest martyrdom of all.

In leaving South Africa, Solly said that there came to his mind the farewell snarl of Coriolanus to his fellow citizens, as he left Rome to go into exile: 'For you the city, thus I turn my back. There is a world elsewhere.' The circumstances were different, but the words themselves are fairly apt and reveal the strong individualist in Solly. With all his faults and whims, here was a man who had overcome adversity and made a deep impression on the political life of the country. He had fought with courage and tenacity for a group of people who, taken by and large, were prepared to admire him—but very little else.

There have been two assaults on the citadel of Afrikaner nationalism during the last fifty years, and both of them have been beaten back. The major one came from General Smuts, the minor one from Solly. At different levels both aspired to draw South Africa away from the influence of 'Little Afrikanerdom' into the world orbit. Smuts tried it through the British liberal tradition, Solly through the Labour movement. They failed because the Afrikaner's main preoccupation is with retaining his racial hegemony and not with the social and economic facts of life.

The Garment Workers' Union which Solly led for close on twenty-five years was almost totally Afrikaans in its membership, apart from the Coloureds and the Africans; yet Solly resisted all onslaughts from the Afrikaner Nationalists. It is not as hard as it might seem to understand this. Solly had won so many advantages for the Afrikaner workers through his energy and skill that they could not forbear to cheer this fascinating and exotic Horatio. But after the acclamation they went to the polling booths and voted Nationalist. In the 1943 election Solly tested his strength politically. He polled a paltry 400 votes in a constituency carrying 500 garment workers. If Solly had won the Afrikaner worker to the Labour movement it would have been a serious breach in Afrikanerdom and would have altered the whole course of our political evolution. But he never looked like succeeding. As with Smuts, South Africa was too limited a field for him. Give me a point of support far enough away from it and I will shift the world, Archimedes once said. Both Smuts and Solly sought points of support outside South Africa. Smuts found his in liberal Britain; Solly sought his in the world socialist movement. Both these points of support proved inadequate.

In any event, the garment workers were not, and could not have been, socialist, for the simple reason that their basic attitude to the black man is obnoxiously feudal. And this can be said of the workers in general. Race and blood, and not equality and comradeship, were the determining factors in their political

attitudes. The clashes with the Coloured workers in the factories were typical, and not casual. Here is the measure of the political Procrustean bed on which the socialist Solly Sachs was stretched out. Solly was fond of recalling the heroic days of the Boer nation in its struggle with imperial Britain, and the Rand Revolt of 1922, when British and Afrikaner workers fought side by side. But these are the snows of yesteryear, and have little relevance to the changed circumstances. The well-paid British skilled worker has slid into *bourgeois* quiescence; the Afrikaner worker is drunk with nationalism.

An Afrikaner with a very narrow political outlook, and hailing from the working class, might have succeeded in building an Afrikaner working-class party of negligible dimensions. But where does Solly fit into it? In a nationalist movement such as Afrikanerdom the workers make up the rear. They are neither independent nor even autonomous. That is how it was in Nazi Germany, too. By proclaiming his Leftism from the rooftops, Solly became highly vulnerable. And the Afrikaners are very good shots. Political life in Britain is overlaid with a heavy veneer of respectability, and it is possible to disguise things; not so in South Africa, where the groups face each other sullenly. It is a matter of survival—of life and death. Politics here are about as subtle as a rhinoceros; Solly was badly gored.

I saw Solly in London when I visited Europe a few years ago. He was not wasting his time, for there was a government to have a go at—the one in South Africa. By plane, bus and train he was travelling up and down Britain telling what he knew about the Nationalist government—and it was not flattering. Manchester University gave him a fellowship which carried him over two years. Then London University gave him a fellowship for a year. He is again without a regular income. The *Manchester Guardian* wrote him up, mentioning that his expert knowledge of industrial law should be utilized by the trade unions, but nothing has so far come of it. In the review of his

book *Rebels Daughters*, *The Times Literary Supplement* referred to him as one of the most remarkable trade unionists of this century. The latest I hear is that he is studying law for two years. At his age it is not going to be easy for him to find a place next to Marshall Hall, but Solly will have a good try. And he has also contested unsuccessfully on behalf of the Labour Party the Hallam constituency of Sheffield. But the South African government is still his main target. On the Thames estuary this Captain Ahab is rebuilding the *Pequod*. And he is hoping to sail south one day to strike once more at Moby Dick.

Churchmen in the Fight

Dr Ben Marais

RELIGION IN South Africa concerns itself with earthly matters as well as heavenly ones. This tendency is especially marked among the Afrikaners, whose Calvinistic realism derives from the earthiness of the Old Testament. For inspiration they turn more readily to the national leader Moses holding the tribe together in the march to Canaan, than to Jesus, whose doctrine of love transcends national boundaries. Religion is for them the pillar of smoke by day and the pillar of fire by night to protect the nation from the Amalekite and the Egyptian. Here, for instance, are the comments of the Rev. G. J. J. Boshoff, a Dutch Reformed Minister in a Johannesburg suburb, on the wounding of Dr Verwoerd:

The wounding of Dr Verwoerd on the eve of our Day of Humiliation has made big tears fall on our altar. Nobody will tell the Afrikaner what he is to say at the altar. He is alone responsible, first to God, and then to himself. The Afrikaner's altar is his biggest weapon, his nuclear bomb, his firing squad. For three centuries the history of the Afrikaner people has been one long 'via dolorosa'. There is nothing that the enemy fears so much as an Afrikaner who prays.

The black giant of Africa is eating bread for which he has not sweated, he wants to wear clothes which do not fit him, he wants to pay with what he does not have yet, distribute what he does not possess yet, wants to talk about things he does not yet comprehend, wants to be where he still is not. By contrast, the white giant is entirely ignored. The real giant of Africa, the white man—and his name is Afrikaner—doesn't come into the picture at all.

Our nation was born small, but it has grown to giant proportions. The real difference between the white giant and the black giant is—knowledge

on the one side, and ignorance on the other. The black giant has so far lost nothing, except his balance. Now he is asking for what he does not yet own, and what he has not yet lost. He is asking for the cancellation of the Ten Commandments, our spiritual contract with God. The white giant who for centuries has prevented the savage races from slaughtering each other; who has brought them the light of creation, the bread of the body and the bread of life—is today being besmirched by these same people.

Today the nation needs more than consolation and promises. It needs destiny. David taught us that a Philistine cannot be merely prayed away—he must also be beaten away. We must unite in the face of the common danger. The black masses of Africa do not seek the white man's friendship but his destruction. The snakes of unrest and agitation have crept out of their holes. For every white man in South Africa the hour of eleven has struck. He must make his choice now, or he will never choose again. The Afrikaner people is no longer fighting isolated enemies like Dingaans, Colleys and Milners—the whole world is arrayed against him. The emergency of 1960 is a repetition of the plight of our nation when in 1838 the Voortrekkers faced the black savage.

The sustained devilish cry of 'Verwoerd must go' has now assumed form in the horrible image of an assassin. The assassin of yesterday is today a mirror in which more than one person in South Africa will recognize his own ghastly face. Before God we profess this morning that it was not only Dr Verwoerd who has been shot. The whole Afrikaner nation has been shot. Every true white man has been shot. Just as the Voortrekkers had been united as one man in the laager of Blood River, the nation must now unite in the laager which is being made, the laager of the Republic of South Africa.

Every white man who loves this soil and loves his own child, must come together in the same laager. The time has come to meet the enemy on his own terms—those who strike must be struck back.

And this parades as Christianity in this land of ours. If this could be said in a Johannesburg church, it would be interesting to have a sample of Christianity from the remoter regions. It only remains that *Die Transvaler*, official organ of the Transvaal Nationalist Party, gave this sermon a six-column spread, which seems a mark of approval. Mr Boshoff has since been appointed Military Chaplain to Voortrekkerhoogte, the equivalent of Sandhurst. In all fairness, it must be pointed out that some Afrikaner churchmen have blushed at the sermon's brazenness. But

the Boshoffs are an important influence in the shaping of the Afrikaner spiritually. That is the significance of the sermon.

However, this tendency within the Dutch Reformed Church is being resisted, and some are becoming more concerned to bring the doctrine of Christian love to Greek and bondsman as well. The leader of this trend within the Dutch Reformed Church is the Professor of the History of Christianity at the predominantly Afrikaans University of Pretoria, Dr Ben Marais, whose humanitarian doctrine is likely to make its impact on the country's political life.* His humanitarian religious ideals contrast sharply with such political harangues as those of Mr Boshoff.

Dr Marais is a mild-mannered man, full of charm and kindness, who has made it his business to bring the spirit of mercy and charity to all people. He is doing so with a will that is winning the commendation of every civilized human being, Afrikaner as well as non-Afrikaner. And he is doing so in the face of cries of 'Apostate!' and 'Renegade!'

If certain overseas papers have been at fault, it is in beginning to use the word 'Afrikaner' as a general term of opprobrium. Nothing could be more unjust. For a large number of them have overcome the burdens of history and are fighting nobly in the ranks of those who would enshrine humanitarian values in this land of conflict and enmity. But the nation as a whole has still to give heed to Margaret Ballinger's exhortation to take account of other people's hopes, anxieties and aspirations. Professor Ben Marais is prepared to do it, as is evident from the discussion I had with him at Pretoria.

B.S.: You have seen the sermon by the Rev. G. J. J. Boshoff, who exalts racial exclusiveness and regards the African as a

* Dr Marais was born in 1909 at Steynsburg, Northern Cape, and was educated at Middleburg High School, Stellenbosch University, Princeton and Yale. He had a brilliant academic career and was admitted to the Dutch Reformed Church in 1936. He was appointed to his present post in 1954. His books include *Die Kleurkrisis en Die Weste* [The Colour Crisis in the West].

stranger and inferior. What are your views on the matter?

Marais: I entirely disapprove of its tone and content. In Christ all barriers fall away.

B.S.: Does that mean that you are against all racial differentiation.

Marais: Differentiation or diversity is inevitable if we take into account environmental background and a different intellectual approach to matters. But racial isolation—no.

B.S.: Has the Church any mandate to keep the races intact or pure?

Marais: I doubt it. The Church has the clear responsibility to seek and to demonstrate the unity of the people of God, in spite of all racial and cultural diversity. The Church as the Body of Christ, the communion of the saints, the people of God, is based not on racial or ethnic factors but on faith. The Church, standing in the midst of a world of rich human diversity, does not ignore this God-given diversity; but on the other hand the Church, as the break-through of the coming age into this present sinful dispensation, must ever be true to its character and high calling to unite believers from all nations and races, and in its own life must overcome the barriers which divide believer from unbeliever.

B.S.: Does that mean that you would not exclude any racial group whatever from admission to fellowship in worship?

Marais: The moment a Christian Church becomes exclusive and certain groups are refused admission to fellowship in worship on account of race or colour, it is sinful. Such a policy clashes with the very character of the Church of Jesus Christ. Where separate Churches exist (and often exist for very good linguistic reasons, for instance) I cannot see that it is sinful—as long as the practice of normal Christian communion between members of different Churches reciprocally remains the steadfast and positive striving of mother and daughter Churches; and as long as the Church by precept and example enlightens

and prepares its members for the practice of such communion with members of the other language or racial groups.

B.S.: Are you then against separate Churches based on racial grounds?

Marais: Separation on these lines will almost certainly have the effect not of bridging or overcoming prejudices, but of giving these prejudices permanence. Segregated Churches can only spring from a sense of racial superiority or a desire to get rid of the less developed brother on grounds of race or colour; they clash with a sense of Christian responsibility and love. If white Christians follow practices of exclusion, they have no future in the Africa of tomorrow. When the white races suggest to the other races that it would be advisable for them to retain their distinctive character, it is regarded as an attempt on the part of the white races to maintain their own superiority and to force the non-white races back to their earlier culture. The intellectuals of the other races who have enjoyed a Western education would be the first to interpret it in this way. Here also there is deep distrust of the intentions of the white race. And one of the consequences of this distrust is that any attempt to retain the distinctive racial character in education or in any other sphere, and to do so by constraint, is branded as imperialism.

B.S.: What is the actual position today? Is a non-white worshipper admitted to Afrikaans churches?

Marais: A Coloured or an African would be refused *regular* attendance in almost any white Afrikaans church, and even occasional attendance in at least most Free State and Transvaal churches.

B.S.: It is said that here in South Africa Christian beliefs are determined by nationalism, and not nationalism by Christian belief. How would you resolve this clash between the State or nation and God, with which Christians have been faced throughout the ages?

Marais: In some countries that issue is as real today as it

was for Germany two decades ago. In almost every century believers have had to face situations where they were denied the right to give their supreme loyalty to God alone. While we must never take the attitude that race or nation is not important, we must stress the fact that the Church transcends race or nation. The Church is not, and may never be, limited or restricted by considerations of race or nationality.

B.S.: The argument has been advanced that the Afrikaners must take the necessary steps to ensure self-preservation.

Marais: Self-preservation *by itself* as an ideal leads to Friedrich Nietzsche and not Christ. National consciousness is natural. But it may not become the supreme ideal or motivating force in a nation's life. For then it becomes an idol and a nation's real god.

B.S.: Do you believe that nationalism can play a negative role in the life of a nation?

Marais: President Nasser's Egyptian Islamic nationalism, Dr Verwoerd's Afrikaans Christian nationalism or Dr Nkrumah's West African form of nationalism have one element in common—they are all out for absolute goals. Nationalism never halts half-way. It goes the full mile. It may be pacified into accepting interim goals for a short time. But ultimately it is never satisfied without accomplishing final goals. Aggressive nationalism despises wise counsel, and compromise is branded as weakness. As I have said, it leads to Nietzsche and not to Christ.

B.S.: We have so far discussed the religious aspects of the racial problem, such as *apartheid* and kindred matters. But circumstances are such in South Africa that religion and politics are closely intertwined—Mr Boshoff's sermon is proof of that. So, to turn to the social and economic scene, what is your attitude to political and economic *apartheid*?

Marais: As long as there is economic integration, *apartheid* can never be applied consistently and with decency. It is not feasible, and the whites will not be prepared to pay the price.

And where is the necessary land? The whites cannot or will not apply it, because our whole industry and economy have been built on the labour of the Native.

B.S.: Are you in favour of granting political rights to the black man?

Marais: When once we admit that several millions of non-whites will live permanently among us, who know no other home, then to the extent that the non-whites develop, we as Christians and democrats will not in the long run be able to deny them political and other rights. Nor will we be able to limit these rights to a bare minimum.

B.S.: What other rights have you in mind?

Marais: If our Church wishes to be true to its calling, it will have to act as protagonist and protector of the proper economic and other interests of the non-whites to a greater extent than in the past. We live in a world where the trend is unmistakably in the direction of more rights for minority groups or subject majority groups. The tide is very strong, and it would be foolish not to take that fact into account.

B.S.: A little while back you spoke about the role of the Church on the whole continent of Africa. Could you elaborate this point? What is its main problem in this regard?

Marais: I believe the Christian Church has a great role to play in the emerging new Africa. It holds the key to better relations among the different racial groups. But to accomplish this, it must not itself be a colour- or caste-ridden community. While governments in different parts of Africa are struggling to find a key to racial peace—up till now with few signs of success—I believe the Church of Jesus Christ remains the decisive factor. If the Church fails, the future of Africa is dark indeed. The task of the Church in Africa seems to me to centre around these few basic points. First, the Church will have to witness, to evangelize and win the African masses for Christ. Then the Church will have to stand for social justice. It will have to take

a vital interest in and, if need be, openly champion the African's legitimate rights and economic interests.

The Church cannot win the respect and loyalty of the Africans if it fails to take a vital interest also in their material needs. To stand aloof, or to side automatically with the white groups, would be fatal. The Africans would reject the Church as a white man's, or imperialistic, institution. Of course the Church will have to act with great care and wisdom and will have to guard against the tendency in some quarters to champion any and every wild African aspiration merely because it is African. If the Christian Church in Africa fails in its prophetic character, and merely tries to perpetuate the status quo in race relations or racial patterns, it will fail all along the line; it will find itself unable to meet the needs and realities of a new day in Africa, in which nationalism and race consciousness and sensitiveness are very marked. This, to my mind, is the problem of the Church in the present world situation and in the emerging Africa.

B.S.: We have so far been talking about things in general. May we now turn our attention to more specific things? Can you tell me briefly of your fight to win the Dutch Reformed Synod over to a more progressive attitude in religious matters, more particularly where racial matters are concerned?

Marais: In 1944, at the meeting of the Dutch Reformed Synod, seventeen delegates sided with me in opposing the view put forward that the Bible favours *apartheid*. The discussion was dropped.

B.S.: What was the total number of delegates?

Marais: About 400. In 1948 the matter came up again, and after a long discussion it was decided to send it back for further study. In 1951, while I was away in the U.S.A., a big majority of the Synod voted that, according to the Bible, *apartheid* was not only permissible but obligatory. A small, energetic minority opposed it. In 1954 the World Council of Churches met at Evanston, U.S.A., where the decision of the Synod was strongly

criticized. In response to the appeal to reconsider policy, the Synod appointed a committee of theologians to look into the matter, and a new policy statement was issued which differed radically from the previous decision. It was accepted by all the four Provincial branches of the Dutch Reformed Church. The so-called scriptural foundation for the *apartheid* resolution was almost totally watered down.

B.S.: That seems a very sharp change on a fundamental issue. Was it due to the pressure of world opinion?

Marais: To some extent. But there were other factors. The Afrikaner, as a result of historical parallels, draws much of his inspiration from the Old Testament and the example set by Israel in ancient times. But on closer study they changed their minds.

B.S.: In which direction?

Marais: In trying to work out a Christian approach to the race problem, we find that the Bible is not sensitive to race as such. It is doubtful whether the Bible says anything definite about race at all, at least in the modern biological sense of the word. Not race but faith is the prominent category in the Old as well as the New Testament. In the Bible the decisive categories are not racial units but believers and unbelievers. Even the injunction to Israel not to intermingle with the surrounding peoples has no racial basis (in a biological sense). This is clear from the fact that all these surrounding peoples belonged to the same race as the Israelites: they also were Semites. But they served other gods. It was not a racial but a purely religious injunction. And through its whole history Israel made proselytes from the ends of the earth. These members of other races who accepted the God of Israel in course of time became true Israelites, and were integrated into Israel. But Israel as the people of the Covenant were forbidden to intermingle with the surrounding pagan people of the same race so that they would not be drawn away from Jehovah to serve other gods. To use Israel as an

argument for racial segregation in the modern world makes no sense at all.

B.S.: But surely, Christian and Pauline doctrine are quite explicit on the question of the equality of all races in the eyes of God?

Marais: That is so. But, as I said, the Old Testament was the major influence with us in these considerations, and a further study of its injunctions on that subject was necessary, as a result of which policy was changed.

B.S.: Does your Church allow for changed circumstances? I say this with reference to the Old Testament.

Marais: Quite definitely.

B.S.: Now for some personal questions, if I may. Have you any colour prejudice?

Marais: None whatever. I treat individuals purely on merit. I did not arrive at this in a day. I can still recall that when I was at Princeton University I had occasion to shake hands with a number of Negro students. At first, I found it necessary to go back to my room and wash my hands. But when I returned some years later, I found that I had left all that behind.

B.S.: Have your liberal views made things difficult for you at the University, which is considered a stronghold of traditional nationalism?

Marais: The staff came out in public disowning me, as did a large number of students. Many of the staff are cool towards me and others who hold views that are not strictly orthodox; but the pupils of my classes have been very reasonable. They are mature post-graduate theological students who are prepared to listen to viewpoints different from their own.

B.S.: Your views did not stop you from being appointed to the professorship?

Marais: The voting was very close. Two of my sponsors advised me to withhold publication of my book on colour, as it would prejudice my chances. But I refused to do so, as I felt

that those making the appointment should know where I stood.

B.S.: What is your attitude to Archbishop Joost de Blank?

Marais: I am personally disappointed at some of the things he says, and the way he says them. His attacks on the Dutch Reformed Church have made it difficult for people like myself, who would like to co-operate. He can be tactless and unhelpful.

B.S.: Do you think his views are coloured by jingoism and a dislike of the Afrikaners?

Marais: Possibly.

Here, on the spiritual plane, the same struggle is being waged between chauvinism and humanism. It is comforting to know that the fight for progress is in the hands of such a man as Dr Ben Marais. The Sharpeville tragedy has resulted in a good deal of soul-searching among Afrikaner churchmen. Typical is the sermon delivered by the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Cape, Dr A. J. van der Merwe, in the Groote Kerk in Cape Town:

During the present state of unrest it is necessary for the nation to withdraw itself into the inner room of meditation, not only to make known to God our plight, but to learn what God wishes to convey to us through the present situation. The mistake made by Israel in Old Testament times was that it flattered itself that God had chosen it as an end to itself, and that it pleased God to guarantee its continued existence just because it was Israel. The truth is that God was interested in the continued existence of Israel only for one reason—not because Israel was a separate nation with its own identity, but solely in so far as Israel answered to the call of being the carrier of the godly revelation. The same applies to the Afrikaner nation. It is a time for meditation with God and to listen to what he has to say. What God will say to us I don't know. It is possible that he will say less pleasant things to us. It is possible that he will say that because of our moral and religious degeneration we deserve to be cast out and to be trodden upon. It is possible that he will point out to us that we have not honoured our obligations which must flow from our guardianship over the coloured races in spite of what we have done or intend doing.

'Delayed Action'

As Afrikaner churchmen find Verwoerdism to be in conflict with true Christian doctrine the rift in the Dutch Reformed Churches is becoming wider. It has assumed such proportions that the Nationalist government is beginning to stir uneasily. Things came to a head at the World Council of Churches held in South Africa in December 1960, when the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke of the Cape and of the Transvaal, easily the biggest of the three Dutch Reformed Churches, took up a stand against the racial policies of Dr Verwoerd and were vigorously denounced by the other two.

The Council of Churches called for a New Deal based on the rejection of all unjust discrimination. There was agreement that:

(a) There was no scriptural justification for debarring non-white Christians from any Church.

(b) Non-whites should have the right to own land and participate in the Union's government.

(c) Any policy which permanently denied this right was unjust.

(d) Consideration should be given to the admission of Coloureds to Parliament.

(e) There should be more effective consultation between the government and leaders accepted by the non-whites.

The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke, in supporting the resolution, believes that these concessions are not in conflict with the policy of *apartheid*; the two sister Churches have expressly stated that they cannot be reconciled with *apartheid*. The progressive section of the Church may not have condemned *apartheid* outright, but it is clearly dissatisfied with existing government policy; and this constitutes a major advance, for in the past it has been a solid buttress for Nationalist Party doctrine. Dr Verwoerd's recent declaration that he was resolutely opposed

to having the Coloured section represented by Coloured Members of Parliament has tended to deepen divisions, more especially in the Cape, where members of the Nationalist Party, and even the party organ *Die Burger*, are openly resenting his intransigence.

The cleavage in the Church has given rise to an extensive correspondence in the Nationalist Press, revealing a great deal of genuine soul-searching on the part of Afrikaner churchmen. In reply to a letter addressed to *Die Burger* by the wife of a Cabinet Minister, urging churchmen to steer clear of politics, 'of which they are ignorant', a clergyman wrote:

Typically feminine, the writer has a great admiration for heroes. Therefore one can understand her prayer of thanks to Providence for the leadership of our Prime Minister—as well as for those who understand politics better in all its implications. I do not fall in the latter category—and since Dr Verwoerd's 'no concessions' utterance, even less so. But why always start with the clergy with your advice, madam? Admittedly they do not always possess the insight and foresight which is the allotted portion of intuitive women, but they must take up their stand in accordance with their divine mission to proclaim, in the name of Him who commands them all, the Gospel of *all people*. Perhaps our clergy are not always tactful—Jesus Himself was not what one could describe as 'tactful'. The other evening I and my *fiancée* were in the Coloured district. In one of the houses we encountered a Coloured woman lying ill under a few tattered blankets. The doctor had already called, but could not be summoned again because there was no money to pay him. The prescription which he left is still there, because there is no money to buy a bottle of medicine. In the dark, seven children stared at us in their hunger. She and her husband do not earn enough to pay my private petrol bill! These, my dear madam, are the people who assist you and me in our work and (in some instances) enrich us. I must add that this same terrible poverty is present in 80 per cent of Coloured homes. As long as these conditions prevail among the Coloureds, from which you and I are not exonerated, you and your beloved Prime Minister can forget about independent 'development'. No, madam, like you I believe in *apartheid*, which is a natural process and not a new idea of the government—but as a moderate Nationalist I have seen the writing on the wall for a long time already, and my warning to the politicians (and their emancipated women) is: Don't place obstacles in the paths of the clergy when they try to take the gospel to all the races.

But the most vigorous attack on Dr Verwoerd and his government comes from an independent group of Afrikaner churchmen who have condemned *apartheid* outright as being in conflict with Christian doctrine. In the van of this attack is Professor Ben Marais, whose views have already been given here. Eleven of them, including Professor Marais, have now published *Delayed Action*, a book in which they set out their viewpoints with a vigour and conviction that have made a deep impact on political thought. The excerpts given below are evidence of a mounting opposition which Dr Verwoerd will find it difficult to contain:

Professor B. B. Keet: It is acknowledged that our Afrikaans-speaking Churches are in favour of total *apartheid* provided that the division will allow each group its fullest rights. The fact is, however, that such a division is not possible at this stage in our history. If it had been done a hundred years ago, there would have been something to say for it, but after centuries of co-existence and co-operation in the building up of the same fatherland, it is unthinkable that such a general shifting of people can take place without the greatest injustice to one or the other side. It speaks for itself, as has already been shown, that the weakest always gets the short end of the stick. But assume that it is still possible for this to happen, how will it be done? The supporters of total *apartheid* argue that the steps which lead to it will necessarily demand great sacrifices, but that they are only temporary transitional measures which have been necessitated in order to reach the ultimate goal. In this connexion many questions can be posed: for how long will such temporary measures of force be necessary? and what mound of sorrow and misery with attendant hate will be built up in the meantime?

One of the fallacies with which we satisfy ourselves is the assertion that our *apartheid* policy is misunderstood. A hostile Press is generally blamed for this. If there could only be a true portrait of what is really meant by this policy and of what has already been done in South Africa to improve the lot of the non-white, this opposition would disappear and South Africa would become a model for the whole of Africa. Now, it must be acknowledged that our country has had to endure much in the way of exaggerated and false reports which have appeared in the foreign press, but this does not detract from the fact that in responsible circles overseas there is a relatively correct conception of our policy; the presence of ambassadors and other representatives of foreign governments in our country is sufficient

guarantee that at least no distorted presentation of views will come from these sources. . . .

The time is irrevocably past when we might have thought that world opinion could be changed by merely relaxing the methods which we apply. This concerns the worthiness of the human personality, which cannot be used purely as a means to an end but which also has a say in deciding its future. If there is one thing which is apparent from the fast developing situations of our time, it is most certainly a fact that the century of colonialism is past; and South Africa cannot afford to cling to what someone has rightly called an internal colonialism.

Prof. Hugo du Plessis: Against this background we must see the Christian world's disapproval and condemnation of our racial policy. Because the Christian world is convinced that it should protest with everything in its power against all injustice, and because the desire for unity is so all-important, our racial policy is regarded as contemptible, wicked and intolerable. The whole Christian world is firmly convinced that *apartheid* obstructs the expansion of the Kingdom of God among the non-whites and that, if tolerated, it will bring down the scorn of the non-white upon all Christianity. *Apartheid*, according to this view, is an insult to human dignity and a menace to world peace. We have tried to determine the background and causes of the bitter opposition to our colour policy and to depict and understand the views of people as objectively as possible; and, although we cannot agree with all of them, we dare not live in a fool's paradise. One thing is certain: although many things may change, the world will never return to a state of colonialism and acceptance of white domination over the non-white people. That period is gone for good. We stand at the beginning of a new era, with new relationships.

Only a Christianity which acknowledges and wishes to promote the principles on which both nationalism and universality are based, which is prepared, moreover, to cross barriers, build bridges and win trust, will have a future. There is a future only for a Christianity which protests against discrimination, oppression and an all-destructive war, which wishes to promote nationalism and solidarity positively, which stimulates true progress with the flame of love, and which flames out into acts of love, alleviating the distress and misery of the world and, with the gifts received through merciful kindness, contributes unselfishly to the development of underdeveloped areas. There is a future only for a Christianity which promotes self-expression in Church, political organization and culture, and which teaches love of one's own language, culture and fatherland. . . . With such a Christian witness we

can go forward to meet the new era without fear, not in a spirit of hard-hearted criticism or know-all, but in humility and love, while confessing our guilt, not in order to manifest our own wisdom or goodness or love, but in order to let God Himself speak through His Word.

Dr M. J. Redelinghuys: For the Coloureds and Indians *apartheid* means, in effect, unjust discrimination and oppression. What other reasons can we advance for the Indians and the Coloureds not having the same rights and opportunities as the white to live a life worthy of a human being? Will we continue, before God and man, to clasp our hands in indignation when we are accused of unfair racial discrimination? Have we ever honestly tried to examine the effects which the Group Areas Act, Job Reservations etc. have on these people? Do we realize that we are directly responsible for the great poverty among so many of them? Let us try to justify this before God, the God who is far more concerned about the poor than He is about the rich. Will we still continue to believe that we are the bulwark against communism in Africa? Will we still continue in this self-deceit while communism has rightly pointed out our economic and other oppression—and has effectively promised the oppressed a better future? Let us listen to what our Coloured and Indian fellow men and fellow South Africans have to say. . . .

What *apartheid* means for the Coloureds and the Indians in the same territorial area, it also means for the Bantu. With this difference, that the Bantu in the so-called white areas have even less freedom than the Coloureds and the Indians. . . . If class segregation means domination of the lower classes by the upper classes, however, we will get a French or Russian revolution. If racial segregation here means the domination of one race by another, then we can expect a South African revolution.

The whole book is an impressive compendium of Christian compassion by people of eminence who are proclaiming their message in the face of ostracism and massive opposition from their own countrymen. While such a spirit of humanity is prevalent, South Africa has no need to fear for the future. Significantly enough, *Die Burger's* political columnist makes the comment that

Neither the Church nor you and I can leave race relations in the hands of Pretoria.* The Churches, through their work, are already knee-deep in

* The reference is to the Transvaal extremists.

race relations in a much more practical sense than a political party which has to deal mainly with white Afrikaners.

Archbishop Joost de Blank

My appointment with the Archbishop Joost de Blank was in the late afternoon at his home in the suburb of Newlands, the loveliest spot in the most beautiful city of Africa. I drove through leafy avenues, cool with the shade of oaks, where a carpet of green and mauve moves gently up the lower slopes of the neighbouring Table Mountain.

When the Archbishop strode with firm tread into the room where I was waiting for him my immediate impression was that this divine, whose every movement and gesture was almost soldierly, not only turned his eyes to the heavens but also had his ear to the ground. And his manner of speaking, and the way he put things, confirmed this impression of a man who had readily adapted himself to the ways of this world, especially the turmoil of its politics. No doubt he is doing good work. But is it not perhaps work that should be done by the politician rather than the churchman?

Here is a sample of the forcefulness with which he expresses himself. It came just after the attempted assassination of Dr Verwoerd.

The tragic events through which we have passed [the Sharpeville shootings] have confronted the Church in South Africa with the gravest crisis in its history. The Africans have now turned not only against those whom they considered to be their white oppressors, but also against the Christian Church, as being identified with them. In the terrible happenings of those days a large number of churches were burnt, ministers of religion were attacked, and Christian members of congregations were threatened and accused of betrayal. It is the view of many Africans that the Christian Church stands as much as the government for white domination and racial discrimination. The Church is now at the cross-roads. Its future is precarious. Unless it openly and publicly repudiates the doctrine and practice of compulsory segregation it is condemning itself to extermination—and the whole

of southern Africa will be wide open to secularism and other non-Christian creeds. The Church throughout the world has uncompromisingly rejected racial discrimination in any form. But pious protestations are one thing—effective action is another. If the Church is to have any chance of survival in this country, the Africans must be shown by constructive action, and not by words alone, that the Churches have turned their backs on compulsory *apartheid* once and for all. But until the Dutch Reformed Churches identify themselves with this repudiation, the Christian faith is unable to make much progress and is in urgent danger of complete rejection by the African people.

It was after I had formed my impression of the Archbishop that I came across this description of him in the *Spectator* by Monica Furlong:

Some ten years ago I was fortunate enough to have, as my parish priest, a man who exhibited precisely this quality of unexpectedness. He had a great capacity for seeing and saying the obvious thing that the rest of us were too clever to say, and an even greater capacity for grasping a point that the rest of us were too stupid to see. He used to hold his mind ajar so long that everyone else's mind ached in sympathy, but when he made up his mind he did it with an absolute finality. Napoleonic, we used to call him (as well as a lot of far ruder adjectives). He trod with great skill the mined pathway between submissiveness and righteous anger, but it is perhaps not difficult to guess which way he toppled when he talked to Mr Macmillan at a Cape Town garden-party the other week. In the agony of South Africa, it is oddly comforting to remember that this man is now Archbishop of Cape Town.

Of the Archbishop's courage I have not the least doubt. I asked him whether a situation could arise where he would be prepared to resort to rebellion, despite the pacifist nature of Christian doctrine?

He replied without hesitation that if laws were enacted interfering with the Church he would openly disobey them.

Nobody would be more at home in such a situation than Joost de Blank. But for myself, as a non-believer, I do not find his militancy so compelling as the Christianity of the catacombs and the Gregorian chants, with their humility and saintliness and pity.

The Literary Scene

Sarah Gertrude Millin

WHO IS South Africa's greatest writer? Some would say Olive Schreiner, whose claim rests mainly on *The Story of an African Farm*. But this splendid effort is far above her other work, which is not very distinguished. Sarah Gertrude Millin, however, has to her credit at least three outstanding novels in *God's Stepchildren*, *What Hath a Man?* and *Mary Glenn*—all this apart from her political writings, which, to say the least, represent a major intellectual effort and reveal the vast and versatile range of the author's mind.

Mrs Millin's biographies of Rhodes and Smuts and her war diaries are fine accomplishments. For the work on Smuts she had to sort out, study and collate the rambling material from vast quantities of correspondence. Only a person with a vigorous intellect and rare nervous drive could have achieved what she did.

Mrs Millin is nothing if not forthright. She carries not only her heart but also her brain on her sleeve; she is prickly, resentful of every external impact. And Sharpeville has been more than an impact.

Mrs Millin resents this crude intrusion into her ordered middle-class existence—and since she suffers from insomnia she has practically twenty-four hours a day in which to resent it. Every little hurt is for her a pain; every pain a torment; and the note of torment runs through everything she has had to say since Sharpeville broke upon us. It extenuates but does not excuse her fiercely reactionary pronouncements. They are all the more

disconcerting because she could have used her prestige to such very good purpose. We all expected it of her, and were sadly disappointed. Though she has proclaimed herself a political opponent of Dr Verwoerd, and was generally bracketed politically with such liberals of repute as General Smuts and Jan Hofmeyr, she has given vent to views on our political predicament which are so near to those of Dr Verwoerd as makes no difference.

Perhaps we expected too much. For Mrs Millin's essential *métier* is literature, not politics.

On the colour question, Mrs Millin is in the abstract sense of the word a liberal—as who is not? But I always felt, when the subject came up for discussion between us, that even at the best of times Africans jarred on her. In these worst of times, it has resulted in quite a spiritual dislocation. An early childhood spent in the Vaal River diamond diggings has had a lot to do with it. She once spoke to me of the drunkenness and disease she had seen there, and, most horrifying of all, miscegenation. All this in condemnation of the blacks.

'But it takes two races to miscegenate,' I parried, in the name of fair play. 'What of the whites, the race with the superior background and tradition?'

She is not only middle-class, but assertively so; she frankly believes in a world in which there is precedence and order. Mrs Millin has been able to merge completely with England's upper strata, and she would like it to continue for ever. With what relish she describes a party of thirty celebrities at Claridge's, the footmen in red plush and knee-breeches. She has come a long way from the disease and miscegenation of the diamond diggings on the banks of the Vaal River. Some of the diamonds dug up by the degenerates from the desert soil must have been adorning the lovely necks and wrists of her guests at Claridge's. But the apotheosis of middle-class aspiration for her was John Galsworthy's home. Here is her description of it: 'There is a perfection of existence—a sweetness and politeness—that

makes me uneasy. Everything is so good: the dogs are so tenderly considered, the birds, the servants, the villagers, the traditions . . .' Her own home also has something of this Elysian quality—and it is being rudely disturbed.

Order and quiet are necessary for Mrs Millin. Clearly, she has chosen the wrong age to be born in—and the wrong place to live in.

It would be folly to minimize the difficulties that encumber South Africa's course towards social sanity. There has been a great advance in recent years as people have begun to realize that, whatever their sentiments towards the Africans, pragmatic considerations alone dictate a policy of concessions. But that is not by any means the general view, even outside the ranks of Afrikanerdom. Many are still looking for a solution in other directions. Mrs Millin is one.

What is so painful is that the only designation Mrs Millin can find for the black man is—savage! savage!! savage!!! in a crescendo of disgust at his unruliness.

Australia is different. Mr Menzies is the wisest of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. He has taken the place in British councils of General Smuts. . . . But why have England and France and Belgium freed their African states? For sheer love of freedom? For sheer love—say—of the leopard-men of the Congo, the cannibals of Nigeria, the slave dealers of the East Coast, the Mau Mau of Kenya?

So, finally, we have a heart-rending jeremiad from her—Mrs Millin is rooted in the Old Testament, and she once spoke to me wonderfully of the farmer Jeremiah:

We have drawn upon ourselves the ire of the world. Whatever evil other countries have done, they feel themselves purged by their attack upon us. Our situation does not make them at all unhappy—not even, if they looked into their own hearts, the situation of our Natives, on whose behalf they are undoing the most innocent of the country. The truth is that human beings are cruel and cowardly, both together (it is an old affair that has to do with self-preservation and survival); therefore they enjoy hurting where

there can be no retribution. The classic case is that of the Jews. When those who see themselves so just speak of the tragedy, the agony, of South Africa, they are not really dismayed. They are delighted. Is Nkrumah dismayed? Is Nasser? Are Father Huddleston and Canon Collins dismayed? 'I saw under the sun the place of judgment that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.' We are providing the righteous with their life-work, a man's only happiness. . . . All our enemies will be at UNO. Presumably, the Rev. Michael Scott. He, however, will be nothing to Nkrumah and his followers; Nasser with his Afro-Asians; all the new African States; Malaya and its adherents; Sweden that, through her neutrality, supported Germany in two world wars, and now leads against us the pack in Europe; Russia, of course; South America, naturally. The world. The world.

She is so overcome by emotion, that she even forgets Dr Verwoerd's out-and-out support of Nazi Germany.

It leaves me dejected when a woman of her stature gives vent to the cry 'Savage!' as the African raises his head from the dust.

Mrs Millin will tell you that she is so good to her servants—says 'Good morning' to them, tends their little ills. What more do they want? These are new times; pleasantries are not enough; two courses are open to the white man—real concessions, or real bullets.

Professor N. P. van Wyk Louw

Professor van Wyk Louw was born in 1906 in the karroo town of Sutherland. At the age of fourteen he went to Cape Town, where he first attended high school and then the University of Cape Town. He was a lecturer in education there for eighteen years. It was during this time that he did his earliest literary work. In 1949 he became Professor of Afrikaans Literature at the University of Amsterdam—a position he held until 1958, when he returned to South Africa to become the Professor of Afrikaans at the University of the Witwatersrand. The most noted of the Afrikaans poets, he has won all the important literary prizes, including the Hertzog Prize for Poetry, Drama

and Critical Essays. His politics are Nationalist. Here is a record of a discussion I had with him.

B.S.: How have the Coloureds and Bantus been treated in Afrikaans literature?

Louw: The white and the Coloured peoples have lived together so long, and are so closely interrelated, that a great deal of Afrikaans writing has had to concern itself with both groups. It is impossible to write a novel about life on a Cape farm without introducing white and Coloured people. The Coloured writer who writes about the same situation will have to introduce views on the white man.

B.S.: Does this apply to the African?

Louw: There is nothing like the same contact with the African.

B.S.: Can you tell me something of the place of the Coloured man in Afrikaans literature from its early stages?

Louw: There is a remarkable development in the way the Coloured man is represented in Afrikaans literature, a development paralleled in European literature. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European literature the aristocracy are the main figures in poetry and drama, and the lower classes usually provide the comic relief. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is an example. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the third estate came to the fore socially and economically, and this reflected itself in the literature of the times—mainly the novel, where they were the heroes and not just the comic foils.

The same development has taken place with the Coloured people. In the early nineteenth century they are comic, drunken figures, not usually villainous. For a long period in Afrikaans literature, the Coloured person played this subordinate role. Von Wielligh, an early twentieth-century writer, was the first to make the Coloured man the main figure in a book. But he was still a comic figure, very sympathetically handled.

B.S.: It has been said that the Afrikaans writer is fascinated by the Coloured. What is the explanation?

Louw: I should say it is because their language is vivid, concrete, earthy, full of striking imagery, and this makes them attractive material for any writer. A little later than Von Wielligh, D. F. Malherbe in one of the first readable Afrikaans novels gives a fine and vivid description of Coloured workers on a Cape farm. But the main interest is their expressive speech, not their economic and social position.

B.S.: When did the Coloured writer first become the central figure in an Afrikaans novel of importance?

Louw: Mikro, one of the leading Afrikaans writers, was one of the first to treat the Coloured man as literary material in his own right. He made him the central figure in the novel, and saw not only the comic but also the tragic element in his life. It is one of the most successful and widely-read Afrikaans novels. The Coloured hero was very sympathetically handled. Mikro drew his material from the most helpless section of the Coloured people, a group which is no longer representative. Today, a Coloured man is more often seen as an artisan, a school-teacher or a minister of religion. They have been coming up in society and in literature. The setting is still largely in the Cape, where there is closer contact between the two races.

B.S.: Are there significant Coloured writers? And what is their approach to the white man?

Louw: There are important Coloured writers in Afrikaans. They generally approach the white man sympathetically and with courtesy. There is an element of dissatisfaction with the social and political position of the Coloured man, but it does not prevent their work being accepted by the Afrikaners. There is an insistent demand on the part of the writers for equality of opportunity.

B.S.: What of the African in Afrikaans literature?

Louw: The contact is less close with the Bantu, and such contact as there is has been over a shorter period. The settings which have been dealt with are the Eastern Province, Orange

Free State and the Transvaal. There has been a development of the same kind as with the Coloured man. In earlier Afrikaans literature, with the memories of the Great Trek and Kaffir Wars still fresh, the black man was seen as the enemy, in the way the Spanish Don or the Frenchman was seen in older English literature. It was an outgrowth of a situation where the two groups clashed. On occasion, it was friendly and even chivalrous contact. The Bantu, unlike the Coloured, has a different language and civilization, and this has made contact more difficult.

B.S.: Was there ever a sympathetic approach to the African by Afrikaans writers?

Louw: Van Bruggen was one of the first to describe the African sympathetically. His types were usually farm labourers or primary school-teachers. This was in the twenties. A little later Franz described with sympathy the old and more traditional black man within his Native tribe. He grew up among them and knew them intimately. They are conservative, stern in their morals. Alan Paton probably learned a great deal from him. He started the fashion of turning the rich Bantu idiom into a European language. The best Afrikaans book on the urban Native is *Black Pilgrim* by F. A. Venter, which has been translated into English. It gives a vivid and realistic description of the modern Native, and for me it ranks at least on the level of Paton. It describes the African's humour, tragedy and economic dilemma. There are the good and the bad, and they are living figures.

B.S.: What is your attitude to *apartheid*?

Louw: Most Afrikaans writers probably feel that the Coloured is part of their own nation, and should be increasingly integrated with the rest of the Afrikaans-speaking group. As regards the Africans, we feel we have here nations differing completely in language and outlook, and would prefer to see different States for the groups, white and black, on the basis of friendly neighbours, like Britain and France. This is a general observation, made without taking economics and politics into account.

B.S.: Do you personally mix socially with the Coloureds?

Louw: As far as the Coloureds are concerned, I feel no element of estrangement, and I mix with them socially when they are on my cultural level.

B.S.: And the Africans?

Louw: As a Cape man I have not made enough personal contact with them to have developed an attitude.

B.S.: Would you like to give your views on the Rev. G. J. J. Boshoff's sermon?*

Louw: When it comes to the direct application of religion to politics, I am rather diffident about telling God precisely what He is expected to do for my own nation.

B.S.: In turning to the exclusive nationalism of the Old Testament, are the Afrikaners not violating basic Christian principles, which transcend national boundaries?

Louw: Without being a theologian, I do believe that the Old Testament has a great deal of universalism, especially in the Prophets and the Psalms. I do not believe that the Afrikaner is more devoted to the Old Testament than to the New Testament. But we all fail in coming up to the very high demands of the Christian religion.

B.S.: Does your Christianity clash with your nationalism?

Louw: Christianity is universal, but not anti-national.

B.S.: Is the attitude of the Afrikaner towards the African in harmony with Christian precept?

Louw: The absolute demands of Christianity will always be, and should be, a force spurring us on to the achieving of better relations between all races. There is a great deal to be done in this regard.

B.S.: Prof. Marais has said: 'The moment a Christian Church becomes exclusive and certain groups are refused admission to fellowship in worship on account of race or colour, it is sinful.' Do you agree or not?

* See pp. 146-7.

Louw: As far as I have a right to speak in these matters, the only reason for having different churches for different races is the practical one of language and of the geographical situation of the church.

B.S.: If you were a member of any congregation of your church, would you turn away a black man who came to worship?

Louw: No.

B.S.: What is your view of academic *apartheid*?

Louw: I believe that the newly-established Bantu Colleges have an important function to perform. On the other hand, I believe that the university should be the most important point of contact for people belonging to different groups. I have been, and am, opposed to the closing of the so-called 'open' universities to other racial groups.

B.S.: Do you hold the same views for the Afrikaans universities?

Louw: I would prefer some of the Afrikaans universities to become 'open'.

B.S.: What was your attitude when the Witwatersrand University fought to keep the university 'open'?

Louw: I supported the official action of the University of the Witwatersrand to keep the university 'open'.

Alan Paton and Nadine Gordimer

Alan Paton and Nadine Gordimer are both vigorously liberal in their politics, and are as opposed to the views propounded by Sarah Gertrude Millin as I am. Alan Paton is a Christian in the full sense of the word, whose views are identical with Father Huddleston's. He is also an active participant in South African politics as the leader of the Liberal Party, which stands for full equality between all races. He is morally outraged by the conduct of the government, and he has attacked them fearlessly and

with ironic bitterness. When the news reached him that, following the declaration of the Emergency Regulations after Sharpeville, a number of Liberal Party members had been arrested while he had remained free, his caustic comment was: 'I must have slipped up somewhere.' And he has publicly called for outside pressure to bring full democratic rule to South Africa, 'since the government has made any other alternative impossible'. He has faith in the future of the country and in the all-embracing humanity which will emerge from the full co-operation of all races and creeds.

In this respect he differs from Nadine Gordimer, who, though a liberal, is as a member of the white race disturbed, in a personal sense, at the prospect of black ascendancy here. Where do the whites fit in? she asks in an article she wrote for the English magazine *Twentieth Century*. Her answer is:

Nowhere, I'm inclined to say in my gloomier and least courageous moods; and I believe that it is true that even the gentlest and most westernized Africans would like the emotional idea of the continent entirely without the complication of the presence of the white man for a generation or two. But *nowhere*, as an answer for us whites, is in the same category as remarks like *What's the use of living?* in the face of the threat of atomic radiation. We are living; we are in Africa. *Nowhere* is the desire to avoid painful processes and accept an ultimate and final solution (which doesn't exist in the continuous process that is life itself); the desire to have over and done with; the death wish, if not of the body, at least of the spirit. For if we are going to fit in at all in the new Africa, it's going to be sideways, where-we-can, wherever-they'll-shift-up-for-us. This will not be comfortable; indeed, it will be hardest of all for those of us (I am one myself) who want to belong in the new Africa as we never could in the old, where our skin-colour labelled us as oppressors to the blacks and our views labelled us traitors to the whites. We want merely to be ordinary members of a multicoloured, any-coloured society, freed both of its privileges and the guilt of the white sins of our fathers. This seems to us perfectly reasonable and possible and, in terms of reason, it is. But belonging to a society implies two factors which are outside reason: the desire to belong, on the one part, and acceptance, on the other part. The new Africa may, with luck, grant us our legal rights, full citizenship and the vote, but I don't think it will accept us in the way we're hankering

after. If ever, it will take the confidence of several generations of jealous independence before Africa will feel that she can let us belong.

This was written before Sharpeville.

What are we to do? Shall we go? Shall we leave Africa? She raises the cry to the heavens. This is her home: physical, cultural and spiritual. From this situation she has absorbed the moods of the landscape, the people and much else. More than an exit visa or the fare to another part of the planet is needed to get her away from her roots. That is the dilemma of the sensitive South African—more especially those who are not prepared to go out into the storms which are fast gathering about our heads.

Nadine is of a delicate and fragile mould, physically and spiritually—like a piece of Dresden china. When she parts her hair in the middle and brushes it flat down—and not the ant-heap style—she recalls to mind Mrs Gaskell and the nineteenth century, with its subtlety, elegance and shelteredness. She has not been made for the second half of the twentieth century, and certainly not for the primordial century that is the Africa of today. In the curl of her lower lip there is already observable a touch of dejectedness, bordering on despair, that does not belong there. Some years back I asked Nadine what it was like to have everything in the world. ‘Lovely,’ she replied. Africa is changing swiftly.

Nadine will go. And I wouldn’t blame her.

Her assessment of the situation here emerges from her answers to a series of questions I put to her.

B.S.: What steps would you take to bridge the yawning gulf between black and white in South Africa?

Gordimer: I think any realistic policy of integration must begin at the beginning—with schools. All barriers of race and colour should be removed in education, from kindergarten to university. Children should enter the non-racial community life

at school-going age, and be educated in mixed classes, with an undifferentiated syllabus and educational standard for all. If this had been done after the war, for example, our country would by now have been able to make use of the best African brains of a generation—they would have been just about ready to emerge, qualified, from the universities at this time, when African nationalism is causing the African people to reach out for responsibility whether they are qualified for it or not. Those of the same generation who, by the limits of their own capabilities, are not fitted for higher education, would at least have reached what is now (in the actual situation) the general average of white education, and this would have made reasonable, even from the African point of view, some form of qualified franchise for all races. I believe that the various education Bills that have created one standard of education for black and another for white are the most evil and disastrous of all *apartheid* legislation.

Concurrently with the integration of education, there should be a qualified franchise for Africans, Indians, Coloureds and whites at once, with a firm date for universal franchise. These two fundamentals—education and the vote—must come first, and together; though ideally, the one should be a preparation for the other. But it is clear that so far as the non-Europeans are concerned, they will never get the horse unless they put the cart first; the only safeguard they can secure to themselves against the long-term consequences of this wrong order of things is a—strictly temporary—qualified franchise. That is why I should introduce such a franchise immediately, for though I agree it would put the Africans at a disadvantage temporarily, it would give them a loud and growing voice while, under a stepped-up educational programme, they are preparing themselves for the responsibilities of the inevitable African majority to come. I do not worry about the colour of future governments—only about whether they will care for justice and be capable of setting up an efficient and incorruptible administration.

B.S.: Would a policy of concessions result in the swamping of the whites by the Coloureds and Africans—a colonialism in reverse, as seems to be indicated by events in the Congo?

Gordimer: The steps outlined above are the only measures that, in my opinion, can hope to prevent 'colonialism in reverse'. Integration is the only answer; and it depends on the active consent of both black and white.

B.S.: Has the situation in the Congo brought about any change in your outlook?

Gordimer: None.

B.S.: Most South Africans, even Dr Jan Steytler, think that it would be wrong to allow outside interference to influence South African internal affairs. Do you agree?

Gordimer: I find it difficult to answer this question with a straight yes or no. I should say it all depends what this country does, and goes on doing. Overwhelmingly, I feel that I should like to see this country right itself—and by that I mean do away with racial discrimination—from within, and by the efforts of its own people. We suffer enough from moral ambiguities as it is; if interference were to mean occupation by force, international policing, or something of that nature, I think we might then achieve justice without having secured to ourselves the touchstone of justice—the knowledge (and strength) of having done the right thing by our own decision and choice. You can stand a man on his feet, but his own sense of balance is deep inside him. I am in favour of interference in the form of moral pressure of all kinds. There are thousands of white South Africans, for example, to whom it would never have occurred that *apartheid* might be considered a disgrace if their favourite sporting team had not been boycotted in some international contest.

B.S.: The view has been advanced that the English section here has in the past deferred too much to so-called Afrikaner moderate opinion, and has on that account failed to establish more vital bonds with progressive African opinion—to the

detriment of the country. The people who hold this view believe that moderate Afrikanerdom as a decisive force is irrevocably lost to Verwoerdism. Do you agree?

Gordimer: I think that it is not only to so-called Afrikaner moderate opinion that the English section has deferred, but to the mass of so-called moderate opinion speaking both languages, a mass that is kept apart only by the diversion of schoolboy loyalties—putting up and taking down each other's flags—but that belongs solidly together on the one question that has reality in our situation: its attitude to the Africans. The average English-speaking South African does not have to defer to the average Afrikaner on questions of African policy, because he is in perfect agreement with him. It simply suits the average English-speaking South African to assert a non-existent moral superiority over the Afrikaner by pretending to 'defer' to an attitude that the English-speaking South African secretly endorses, but that he would be ashamed to admit openly. The whole business of 'bringing the two white races together'—given so much space in the English as well as the Afrikaans press—has long seemed to me so much cant. The two white races do stand together, on the one issue that counts—against the blacks. While this cant has been going on, the really vital bringing together—of black and white—has been ignored. Only the defunct Communist Party, the Congress of Democrats and the Liberal and Progressive Parties have understood the need to establish bonds with progressive African opinion.

B.S.: What is your opinion of the quality of the literature turned out in recent years by the Africans?

Gordimer: I presume this question refers to literature in English. The quantity has been so small that there is not really sufficient to be judged as something as portentous as a separate literature, but if it must be so considered, it takes its standard from one or two outstanding books that have achieved overseas publication. Personal records such as Ezekiel Mphahlele's *Down Second*

Avenue and Peter Abraham's *Tell Freedom* have style and quality of a high order. (Taken, as I prefer to think of them, as part of South African English writing in general, they are the best that has been done in this genre by anybody.) So far, no imaginative writing by Africans has matched this standard, though there have been some good short stories.

B.S.: Certain people hold the view that the Africans will in the years to come dominate the literary field here, since they are best placed to give expression, in all its subtlety, to the racial tensions which make more of an impact on them. Do you agree?

Gordimer: Novelty of subject-matter or point of view may give a fillip to mediocre writing, but the truly creative imagination is not dependent on the novelties but on the deep underlying sameness of all human experience. If Africans do dominate South African literature in the future, it will be because they have produced among their millions some great writers who will not be limited to the expression of the novelty of being black. No one can say at this stage what the contribution of the modern Africans will be to the creative arts: whether they will find their medium in painting, sculpture, music, or literature. Many people think that their outstanding contribution will be to music, since their tradition in this medium is very old, continent-wide, and already (through the work of American Negroes) an important stream in twentieth-century musical development. There is at least as much evidence that a great new movement in art might come from them. Both music and, to a lesser degree, art have remained a living tradition throughout the experience of colonialism. But the fact that there is no African literary tradition does not imply that the Africans' talents are unlikely to lie that way; their oral tradition of story-telling is richly imaginative both in ideas and the use of words, and seems to have come down to Western-educated Africans beautifully unimpaired—most of those I know are brilliant talkers. This oral tradition may flow into the mould of the written word.

I am substantially in accord with what Nadine Gordimer has to say on South African affairs. But I find it difficult to accept the view she expresses that there is no difference of approach to the colour question between the Englishman and the Afrikaner. I agree that the two white races 'do stand together, on the one issue that counts—against the blacks', if what is involved is the handing over of complete power to them. But I firmly believe that, by and large, the Englishman would be prepared to make concessions to the non-white races, for the reason that he is not held captive by those racial myths which prevent the average Afrikaner from viewing the problem rationally. The South African Englishman has a different history and a different tradition, is less insular and therefore more sensitive to world opinion. His sojourn in South Africa may have blurred much of this past, but it has not altogether obliterated it, and it has induced a more flexible approach to our affairs. Making all allowances for cant, they are, more quickly than the Afrikaners, becoming aware that pragmatic considerations alone dictate a policy of concessions.

That does not mean that every Englishman stands on a higher moral plane than every Afrikaner. I yield to no one in my admiration of those Afrikaners—and they are a growing force—who have broken through the trammels of blood and race and found humanity. I am merely stating what I believe to be a fact. One has only to read the English and Afrikaans Press to realize that it is so.

Neither do I agree with the view held by many on the Left that there is no difference between the United Party and the Nationalists. Events may have moved too swiftly for the United Party to play a decisive role in our national affairs. But the difference is this—that while the Nationalist Party is actively and fanatically pursuing a reactionary policy leading to disaster, the United Party is liberal enough, or lackadaisical enough, if you will, to let things take their course, and even make obeisance

to world opinion—which is quite a different matter. It is dangerous in political warfare to lump the intermediate greys together with the extreme blacks—which is what Nadine Gordimer is doing. It is no accident that all but a handful of Englishmen stand resolutely opposed to the Nationalist Party. Admittedly, jingoism, cant and other forces have played their part in determining Anglo-Saxon attitudes, but they are nowhere near decisive. The British democratic tradition, as well as the Englishman's empiricism and sense of reality, are the major factors in the situation. This split in the ranks of the white section is most embarrassing to Dr Verwoerd, and to say it is not there can only help him.

This brings me to Alan Paton, whose views on our political predicament I now give.

B.S.: What steps would you take to bridge the yawning gulf between black and white in South Africa?

Paton: The first step to be taken in bridging the gulf between white and black must be taken now and therefore must be restricted in scope, because the people who are prepared to take it have no political power. This step is to encourage inter-racial association wherever possible, in one's societies, in sports, in churches, in race relations institutes. These are all likely places for the bridging of the gulf, because in general the white people who belong to these associations are more open-minded than others. The home is another meeting ground, this depending on the people who live in it. The political party is another meeting ground, but of course such a party must not be concerned with the maintenance of white supremacy, or the achievement of white unity, but with the planning for a non-racial society.

But I assume you are referring to steps to be taken in the future, and by a party which has political power. The question is this: does one choose a policy of racial reconciliation which will finally lead to a just society, or does one choose just policies

first, and hope they will lead to racial reconciliation? The Liberal Party chooses the second; it does not think there is time for the first, nor does it think it can be justified on principle. The attainment of racial justice would mean: (1) the adoption of a controlled Constitution; (2) the entrenchment of a Bill of Rights; (3) the repeal of all racially discriminatory legislation; (4) a policy for redistribution of the land which would satisfy land hunger and disturb food production as little as possible, accompanied by a vigorous policy of industrialization to ease the pressures on the land; (5) the introduction as soon as possible of an adult franchise.

B.S.: Would a policy of concessions result in the swamping of the whites by the Coloureds and Africans—a colonialism in reverse, as seems to be indicated by events in the Congo?

Paton: It is clear of course that to many white people in South Africa such policies are unthinkable. Some believe they will resist such policies to the death. They believe in a policy of gradualism, but even this they will not implement until they are forced to. And when they have to yield to pressure, they will have to give far more than a gradual extension of rights. The Liberal Party believes that it is important to make allies and co-workers of all people now. The party believes that when concessions are extorted, it may well prove too late to achieve any kind of white-black co-operation. The black South African may simply say: 'We have had enough of you.' Is there a danger of swamping? Do you mean will the majority of our legislators, administrators, public servants, soldiers, and so on, be black? Surely this will be the case. Will white people be badly treated? We believe that there will be scope for the services of any person willing to help develop a new non-racial society. There will be no room for any white person who wants to claim special privileges because he is white. Meanwhile his fundamental rights will be protected by the Constitution, which in its turn will be interpreted by the courts. The contribution of the white

people in South Africa has been immense. They number three million, half the white population of Africa. They have great contributions still to offer to the new South Africa. Will the black people make life miserable for them, or turn them out? They certainly would not do so under the leadership of men like Luthuli and Matthews. Only if a situation of absolute irreconcilability grew up, would black persecute white. I do not think this situation is a necessary one, but a white policy of gradual extension of rights is not likely at this late stage to win black consent or co-operation. Therefore the Liberal Party stands for complete non-racialism, even though there are risks. It considers that any other course will make reconciliation impossible.

B.S.: Has the situation in the Congo brought about any change in your outlook?

Paton: The situation in the Congo has not changed my own outlook. Don't think I like the present chaos in the Congo. But I would prefer that chaos to a Belgian policy of gradualism, which would lead to a second Mau Mau. It was a pity that the Belgians had to make this choice, but they had no alternative. They would have fared better had they decided ten years earlier to embark on a ten-year programme of education, training and extension of rights and opportunities. Further, the Belgians did very little to create any common Congolese purpose, any common Congolese loyalty, either binding themselves to the Congolese or binding group to group in a wider community. The territory called the 'Belgian Congo' was an entity only for Belgians. In South Africa however the name 'South Africa' has come to mean something to all its peoples except the Bushmen. Why should the situation in the Congo change my outlook? Change is coming whether we like it or not. It does not help to rail against it, or say it came too late or too early, or that it is unfair in coming. The most foolish course is to oppose it, or, as the Nationalists are trying to do, to try to confine and restrict it.

B.S.: In what respect does the Liberal Party differ from the Progressive Party?

Paton: The Liberal Party has many affinities with the Progressive Party, but you ask how they differ. I would say that the Progressive Party represents bigger money and business than we do; it represents people less than we do. Therefore it prides itself on its 'realism' and plays down its 'idealism'. Secondly, it represents white people far more than we do. It is concerned, and rightly so, that non-white people have so far taken so little notice of it. In fact it has hedged a good deal about non-white membership and discriminatory legislation (e.g., the Group Areas Act). The Liberal Party is by contrast a non-racial party, whatever the cost. Again, the Progressive Party is more concerned than we are to attract white support, and considers this 'realistic'. In fact I consider its main function to be to convert enlightened white conservatives to a non-racial view. Finally, the 'realism' of the Progressive Party tends to blind its members to the pace at which things are moving, and the necessity for negotiating change as quickly as possible. They still believe they can achieve political power, while we believe there can never be a successful all-white opposition.

In spite of these differences, I believe that the Progressive Party and the Liberal Party will move closer to one another under the pressure of events. But it will be the Progressive Party which will have to do the moving.

B.S.: Most South Africans, even Dr Jan Steytler, believe that it would be wrong to allow outside interference to influence South Africa's internal affairs. Do you agree?

Paton: No, I am not against interference from the outside in our internal affairs. I hope that any real intervention, if it has to come, will be through the United Nations. I oppose the idea of unilateral intervention. I do not regard national sovereignty as sacrosanct; still less do I regard the national sovereignty of South Africa as sacrosanct. Human liberty and human happiness,

with the State guaranteeing basic freedoms to its citizens: these are worthy goals. If a State disregards them, as the South African State does, it cannot expect to be allowed to go its own way unchecked. But the question is not purely a moral one. The fact is that resentment of the colour bar is one of the most powerful forces to be reckoned with in the world today. In a way therefore it is irrelevant to ask whether one is 'against interference'; the real question is, how does one deal with it?

B.S.: Could General Smuts have prevented South Africa from finding itself in the present disastrous impasse? What were his cardinal mistakes?

Paton: Could General Smuts have prevented the disastrous rise of Nationalism? A difficult question. I certainly think that if he had espoused a moderate Nationalism, this might have moderated later excesses. But he was seeking the support of the English-speaking section, and also, I think, he found opportunity for great self-expression within the Empire and Commonwealth. If he made a cardinal mistake, it was that he underestimated the depth of Afrikaner hurt and resentment, and the strength of Afrikaner Nationalism. Yet even if he had correctly estimated these things, he was temperamentally not attracted. The causes of the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism are to be found in Rhodes, Milner, and the Anglo-Boer War, and one can hardly blame Smuts for these.

B.S.: Has the Dutch Reformed Church fulfilled its role here as a Christian Church?

Paton: There are many fine people in the Dutch Reformed Church who see the evils of *apartheid*, and are distressed by its injustices and its disastrous effect on race relations. But the Church as a whole has failed in its duty. It has given support to a policy—*apartheid*—which in the opinion of world Christianity is anti-Christian. It has failed to condemn many pieces of *apartheid* legislation which have caused grief and suffering to innocent people. And it has given support to a philosophy

whereby racial purity and racial survival are elevated to the position of supreme values, as against the Christian values of love, justice, mercy, and truth.

B.S.: What are your views on the sermon by the Rev. G. J. J. Boshoff? How do you account for it that Mr Boshoff, a Christian like yourself, Archbishop Joost de Blank and others should hold views that are diametrically opposed to each other? Does it not confirm the view held by many that religion today has no genuine independent existence, but acts as a spiritual reinforcement of the State when a critical situation arises?

Paton: I find Mr Boshoff's sermon disgusting. You ask how his views and mine are so diametrically opposed; you ask whether this shows that religion has become a mere 'reinforcement for the State and its politics'. Your question is not quite clear to me. Are you suggesting that because two religious persons disagree fundamentally on matters of race, it shows that religion has become a matter of politics? I have quite another suggestion to offer, namely that one of these persons is wrong, and that that person is Mr Boshoff. His views would be repudiated by the vast majority of Christian leaders in the world.

B.S.: What are your views on the articles Mrs Millin wrote for the Johannesburg *Sunday Times*?

Paton: I think Mrs Millin's articles are quite unreal. She lives in a past age, where giants like Rhodes and Smuts strode about the stage. She shrinks from modern Africa; for her it is barbaric. She clings to the old conception of the Commonwealth, where the members were 'aristocrats'. Such a person has nothing important to say about the world we are living in now.

B.S.: What is your opinion of the quality of the literature turned out in recent years by Africans?

Paton: The quality of writing produced by Africans is bound to get better and better. I see no reason why they should take precedence over white South African writers. It depends on how far white South African writers understand what is

happening around them. If they do understand, and they write about it, good! If they don't understand, and they write about it, bad! If they write about something else, no one will read them.

Mr Paton is entirely sincere in his beliefs. Whatever their fate in Europe, liberalism and religion have a part to play in a semi-colonial country, and it is to the credit of the Liberal Party that it has attracted to its ranks a man of the moral and intellectual calibre of Alan Paton. They number quite a few fiery crusaders, including Patrick Duncan, son of a Governor-General. Yet I feel that their role can only be that of a leaven and a conscience. In terms of abstract morals their programme is unexceptionable; but from the aspect of practical politics it could only serve to drive a large percentage of moderates, capable of being persuaded along a progressive path, into the arms of Verwoerd and so render the climate propitious for civil war. It may be, of course, that civil war will prove the only way to resolve South Africa's problems. But it is a contingency to be avoided at all costs. Much will depend on the national forces that the Progressive Party can recruit to its ranks. Its pace is midway between the ox-wagon and the jet. But it is as much as we can take. As I said in the first chapter, to demand that all Africans be given the vote now is tantamount to calling for a socialist revolution, along the lines of Russia in 1917. If that is what is wanted by those who make this demand, well and good. But they should have no illusions.

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